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THE GENIUS OF J.M.W. TURNER, R.A.

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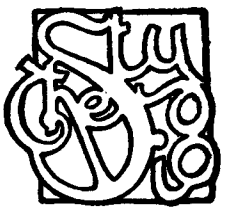

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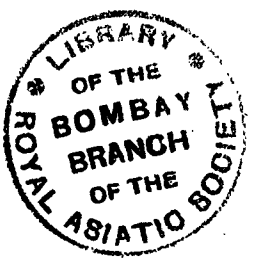

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PREFATORY NOTE

In the following pages an attempt has been made to gather together from numerous sources a representative selection of the drawings, paintings, and engravings of J. M. W. Turner. The examples chosen for reproduction show the work of the great master in all the different periods of his artistic career.

The Water-Colours extend from Turner's twelfth year to his latest period. The monochromes range from the earliest Alpine studies, through the brown drawings made for "Liber Studiorum," and onward to the Roman pencil sketches. The Oil-Painting Section starts with the Diploma Picture, 1800, and ends with the *Mercury sent to Admonish Aeneas*, exhibited at the Royal Academy the year before Turner's death. The plates from "Liber Studiorum," reproduced in facsimile, represent sixteen of the most interesting and valuable proofs in the famed collection of Mr. W. G. Rawlinson; while the engravings after Turner not only recall to mind some of the artist's most elaborate water-colours, but show the astonishing expertness of the engravers whose art Turner moulded to the peculiarities of his own style.

The Editor returns grateful thanks to Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, Bart., M.P., Mr. W. G. Rawlinson, Mr. H. H. Turner, Mr. James Orrock, R.I., Mr. H. Darell-Brown, Mr. Gerald Robinson, Sir Frederick L. Cook, Bart., M.P., Mr. C. Mallord W. Turner, Mr. Arthur Samuel, and to Mr. George E. Blood, whose loan of some superb copies of Turner's Water-Colours—executed with extraordinary skill by the late Mrs. Blood—helped the engravers materially. Acknowledgments are also due to Mr. George Allen, who courteously lent for reproduction some of the best photographs taken for the beautiful volumes on "Turner and Ruskin," and to the Autotype Company, New Oxford Street, London, for the photographs kindly placed at the Editor's disposal.

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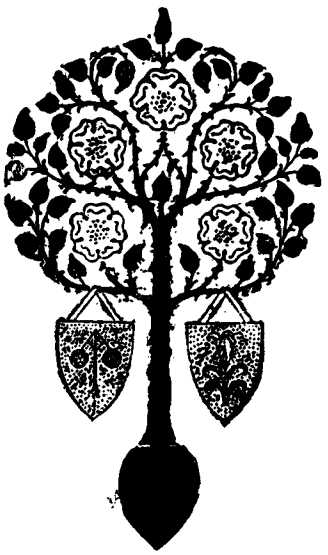
"Turner's Monochromes and Early Water-Colours." Written by Walter Shaw Sparrow.

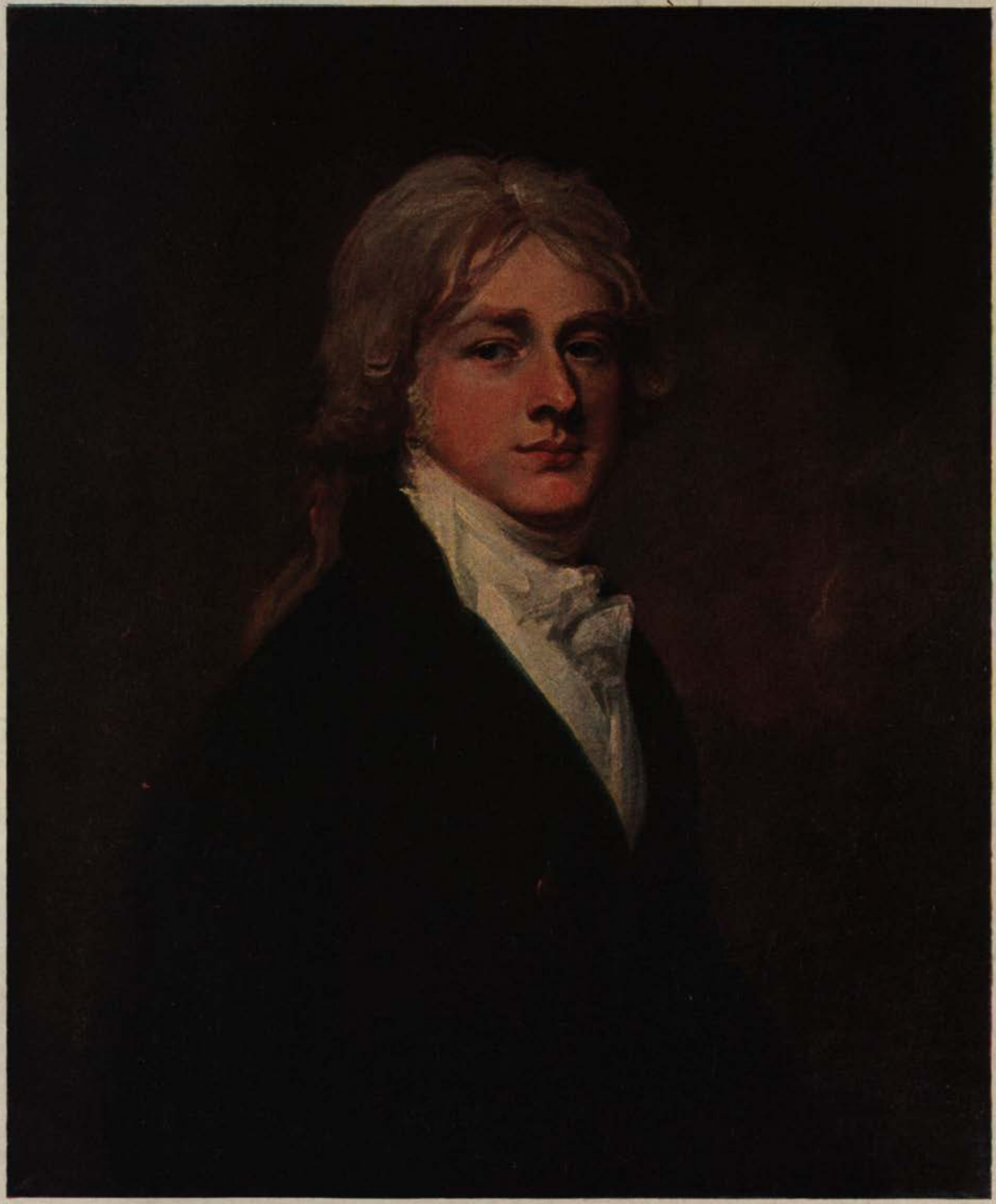
"The Later Water-Colours." Written by Walter Shaw Sparrow.

Turner and his Engravers." Written by C. F. Bell.

* *Erratum.—The date* 1836 *in the headline should be omitted*



Oil-Painting. Artist Unknown



EARLY PORTRAIT OF J. M. W. TURNER

In the Collection of C. Mallord William Turner, Esq.

THE OIL-PAINTINGS OF TURNER

LL forceful artistic realisation is a transposition of Nature—and each new essay in art is a return to Nature. Every time an original genius appears he proceeds to extract from Nature some truth which had been forgotten by preceding schools. Hence he always figures as a realist; and such he is, indeed, in one respect: he is a realist just at that point where his immediate predecessors were not. But while paying fresh homage to Nature he transposes it; and by dint of transposing comes to forget—and that same school which owed its birth to a *return* to Nature, which derived its strength from a *transposition* of Nature, may ascribe its decadence and its end to *forgetfulness* of Nature. Thus the same innovator will seem rather as a realist to those who have preceded him, and rather as an idealist to those who shall follow. And the two opinions are right, because the masters, while resting faithful to Nature at that particular point where they came into touch with it again, at other points transpose Nature, quite unconsciously. They think themselves still realists—as one fancies oneself ever young . . . . They all think in good faith they are painting the pebble lying at their feet, or the puddle on the roadside, and one and all paint you a precious stone which no one can observe at his feet, and a sky such as no one has ever seen above his head. This is the story of all the truly strong and original masters, of all the schools which have revived art, from the time of the Renaissance down to that of our own Impressionists. It is true of Corot as of Ingres, of Millet as of Watteau, of Rembrandt as of Michel Angelo. But of no painter is it so true, perhaps, as of that barber's son who made the name of Turner famous. With none other is it so hard to differentiate in his art between that which impels one to say, "I have seen that!" and that which causes one to exclaim, "How I should like to see that!" or to discover of what sort is the transformation which operated in his imagination and in his hand, in order that such things might be possible. This it is, in a word, which renders it so difficult to say exactly of what Turner's genius is composed.

As for that, which of his works should we study? The more the better. Turnerists consider the master to have had five, six, or even seven "manners." This is too many, or not enough. In a sense, Turner's "manners" were almost as many as his pictures, or at any rate as his *subjects*. For he constantly strove to employ a new *facture*

for each separate effect, and was always seeking after change. He exhausted the entire series of devices with oils and mediums and brushes and palette knives, pursuing his pictures even to the exhibition gallery, profiting by the opportunities offered by "varnishing days" to transform his works from top to bottom, alternately diminishing or raising their tone, to bring them into keeping with the aspect of their neighbours; finally, in despair at his inability to expand his oils as he did his water colours, he boldly stepped across the limitations of his art, and on the oil-painted foundation he superimposed details painted in water colours, in a proportion impossible to distinguish exactly, unless one were, so to speak, to take the canvas to pieces. If then by "manners" one understand all the varieties of execution possible in this work or in that, one would no longer be able to divide Turner's 275 best-known canvases into six or seven "manners," but into a host of others which one might for ever be discovering and noting. Moreover, these variations are not necessarily successive, in the sense that they might be classed chronologically. They are often concomitant, and vary not according to periods but to *subjects*. Thus, after 1802 (see his *Conway Castle*), when he paints seas and beaches his foregrounds are simple and clear, and free from the traditional black *repoussoir*, or "set-off," which down to that date had been the primordial element of "classical" landscape work. On the other hand, when, in 1823, he painted in his foregrounds sketches of land and trees (note his *Bay of Baiæ*), or even in 1832, the date of his *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, these works are carefully provided with the classic *repoussoir*. Or take another example. From the outset of his career he drew ships with rare fidelity—their curves, their foreshortenings; yet right to the end he treated his trees in accordance with the most commonplace academic conventions (observe the pines in the two landscapes mentioned, and the gigantic tree on the left in *Crossing the Brook*). His pine-trees are represented as much slimmer than they are in reality, much more geometrical, devoid of branches, and spreading far too high for human heads the ironical protection of their parasols. Again, although his painting ever continued to grow brighter, his *Windmill and Lock*, done in 1806, is executed in almost a light key compared with that extraordinary Rembrandt of 1829, which he called *Ulysses deriding Polyphemus*. Indeed, his "manners," no matter what period we choose, vary according to the *object* he is painting, or the experiment he desires to attempt; and they are innumerable. If, on the other hand, one is content to discuss simply the great evolutions of Turner's genius—which are as strongly marked in him

FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM J. M. W. TURNER TO HIS FATHER, FROM THE ORIGINAL IN THE COLLECTION OF C. MALLORD W. TURNER, ESQ.

Dadd

I have no more time to talk to Smith. I have long ago desired you and Mrs to get him out but that seems to be of no use of to give him any more time or lets & so again I say get him out at any rate ... like him himself. If he does not get out of the House by next Saturday week, that is tomorrow week

Mr Morris.

that ~~you~~ wife sings and wills not take away the men - but tells the things at once.

You have not said one word about. whether Mr Morris has sent or not: or Mr Lilly for the Picture or Mr Broadhurst or any things which I care about why leave me about Smith affairs I take the Paper about Washing and get it stamped at the Office

Forward. Home

as are in Corot, for instance, the variations between the views of Rome and the under-woods of Ville d'Avray—one finds that the English master has three perfectly distinct "manners": firstly, the classical and Wilsonian style, which one might term his "French manner"; secondly, the realistic English manner; and lastly, the evocational, or purely Turnerian manner. They correspond with three stages of human thought, which are the three stages of Art itself, and, borne into the domain of facts, the three stages of Life. First manner: Nature as the Masters saw it; second manner: Nature as he saw it himself; third manner: Nature as he *wished* to see it. The first period is that of Law, the second that of Love, the third that of the Intellect and the Will. In the one the painter makes art in admiration of the *Masters;* in the other he makes art in admiration of *Nature;* in the last he makes "*art for art's sake.*" In the first he does not feel able to dispense with tradition, in favour of consulting Nature; in the second he consults Nature alone and direct; in the third he feels able to dispense with Nature itself. From former observations he draws a series of deductions more and more hazardous, and thus himself establishes the foundations of another and, in a manner, a conventional tradition. These three stages are normal and necessary, but it is the second—that of direct observation—which enriches the patrimony of art; this it is which gave to Turner all his strength, and gave him, too, the elements of his originality.

This originality is the chief characteristic of his works, and at the first glance the World, and Nature and Life appear before us revived. He who made his way into the Turner Gallery at the Guildhall Exhibition in 1899, or has ever visited one of the rare and mysterious collections where Turner is visible on the Continent, has come out with a vision of terrestrial things revived to such an extent as to have made him feel as though he had for an hour been treading some unknown planet. . . .

A sea strewn with archipelagoes of precious stones, palatial amphitheatres rising from the waters, retaining still the shimmer of the corals and the pearls whence they have emerged; broad perrons washed unceasingly by waves which roll against the threshold of palaces, fawning like tame panthers—a vast Venice, whose canals are oceans, whose parts are islands floating in clear and moving waters—such is Turner's world.

And when it occurs to him one day to paint a railway (see his *Steam, Rain and Speed*), his very railroad passes over the waters, through a water-spout, amidst such a liquid conflagration that one would think

it to be an illustration of the Creation, or that day when the Waters of the Heaven were divided from the Waters of the Earth. An infinity of surprises are often within the borders of one great frame: long flights of steps, descending from lofty terraces, circling around like birds about to alight, and which, having reached the sea, tarry not, but plunge beneath the waters, leading to one knows not what watery empire, to what other submarine palaces; and trees spring up, like jets of water, green, red and orange, to the skies. Gondolas crowding close to palaces in groups like little timorous children, or else apart, their gold or purple horns doubled by the reflection. Whole rows of palaces with the innumerable lines of their ruined columns stretching in long alignment; whole rows of ships and *caravelles*, their shadows mingling and contesting in the waters—a multitude of things, massive and sumptuous, which hang and steep in thick and multi-coloured medley. How one can picture the hordes of Barbarians and Turks and Algerians thronging these holds, or lurking under the drapery or sail and rigging! And the hidden arms, the stolen treasure, and fruits juicy and o'er-ripe! What a jumble of floating oranges and half-open pomegranates; what a mass of vegetable refuse in these Venetian waters at the approaches to the morning market-places—and at the same time what piece of jewellery, what cunning pyrotechnic display, what cultivated flower-patch on the Riviera could equal the effect that Turner has made of all this? Has anything so rich to the eye ever left the jeweller's hand? The gold-dusted green of the imperial beetle, the yellowish-green of the cypress, the blue of the Brazilian butterfly, the deep sapphire of the beetle, the emerald of the sacred scarabæus, the splendours of the *cicindela*—all may be seen in these blots and slabs of colour, heavy and mysterious like ancient stained-glass. "But I tell you they are elephants!" exclaimed M. Victorien Sardou to Alexandre Dumas the younger, as they looked at these gondolas—and in this illusion he thus pictured all the glories of the Indies. They are indeed enigmas—and Turner was for ever setting them. "Guess!" he keeps urging, "Guess!" And one's fancy starts, reconstructs these palaces and towers, listens to the sound of bells in invisible campaniles, pictures motley multitudes on hazy terraces. Then the horizon clears again. Here and there, marking the distances, a pillar enters the water like a tree, and plunges therein, as it were a serpent. Ships hang between the moving canvas of the liquid street and the endless fan of the heavens. See the horizon; the sun, like a King who halts at the top of the staircase he is about to descend, illumines all around with his presence

Oil-Colour, about 1799

A HEATH SCENE

In the Collection of James Orrock, Esq., R.I.

—palaces, masts and ruins—and his reflection goes from wave to wave, right to the shore itself, as it were on the uncertain, shifting steps of a staircase of azure—and above the clouds trail their tawny robes bearing his colours. The heavens breathe free, and the waters flap. The buoys dance incessantly on their fat red bellies—and as it approaches the limits of the frame the cloud system develops, spreading out, taking up ground, and soaring high. Right at the edge, the white cloudlets, like gauze attached to an opera frieze, begin to take fire.

In this Infinite, which is bluish, but scarce blue, and slashed with straggling clouds like flock silk, one feels the intoxication of Space; and little by little that feeling vanishes in the light. Is it Venice? Is it Carthage? Is it Constantinople or Odeypore? The campanile dimly seen in the blue and white mottled sky; the phantoms of arcades leading to somewhere which one can imagine to be the Hôtel Danieli—these are not enough to make one sure. It is architecture of water and of sky. Now it is a harmony with the red dominant of Grenada, now with the citron and pale blue dominant around which all colour symphonies are grouped.

At a dinner at which Frith was present, the salad was offered to Turner, who showed it to his neighbour, Lord Overstone, remarking: "Nice cool green in that lettuce, isn't it? and the beetroot a pretty red—not quite strong enough—and the mixture—delicate tint of yellow, that—add some mustard, and you have one of my pictures!" That is the truth, and no more is needed—with the artist's aid—to evoke in the imagination an ideal world. The material used by the master is the most precious imaginable; indefinable as pollen dust, imponderable as a ray of light. The brush, light as a magnetic pass, seems to have gone over the canvas, from mast to mast, from steeple to steeple like a bee—a bee alighting on forms, not on flowers, and not to carry them away, but rather to give them that which constitutes their whole value, and is their very soul—their colour.

One often hears it said by those who look at these pictures: "But it isn't such and such a town, nor such and such a river, nor such and such a country." And nevertheless, they give better than aught else the *impression* of that particular town, or river, or country. What is the meaning of it all?

In the first place, that which gives us our impression of a country, or a town, or a landscape, is some dominant trait, more strongly accentuated there than elsewhere, some new characteristic which takes one out of the ordinary conditions of life. A town seems to be floating on the water: Venice; or to be built of jewels, proof against

the assault of the seasons: Florence; or sleepily crouching over still waters: Bruges. In these towns are many other features which cause them to resemble every other town, but these traits alone make Venice Venice, and Florence Florence, and Bruges Bruges. The same with regard to landscape: when *provençal* the very structure of the soil shows itself in great lines and herring-bones, and the globe looks to one like a dilapidated piece of sculpture about which a few blades of grass and parietal vegetation have sprung. In the neighbourhood of Paris on a fine spring afternoon one has the impression of dazzle, as through a luminous sieve. On some fair autumnal evening in the centre of France a mass of forest outlines itself against the red sunset in black arabesques, like the entrelacs on the missal's gold.

One's inner being is astonished by this new feature, projecting beyond the rest; and, happy in reading with added clearness one of the notes of universal harmony, one longs to see it written still further, to see it defined or accentuated more deeply. Arrives the artist: he extracts this one trait from reality; he underlines it, effacing or minimising the others, and that which our senses guessed at vaguely, or hardly noticed, becomes the principal feature of his work. He reveals to us but one thing in such and such landscape—its structure; of another, one thing only—its dazzle and glitter; of a third, its arabesques. All else is subordinated, forgotten, ignored. This dominant sensation becomes an exclusive sensation, and one day maybe it grows into a necessity. Thenceforth the artist does not seek to do what he sees. He strives to do that which strikes him in what he sees, to see it more completely, to show it to others as the sole thing to be seen therein. "The wish is father to the thought." In a boat lashed by the tempest all that subsists is the impression of headlong flight before the wind, and a leaping over obstacles, the straining of masts, the letting loose of the atmosphere, the baffling of the sea. In an Italian landscape nought remains but the sense of warm and golden languor, a sky full of perfumes and an earth of sun-rays, amid infinite calm and silence.

Secondly, our impression of a landscape is produced by one dominant feature. Yes, but that impression is formed not alone on the evidence of a single sense.

Of all the perceptions one receives of a country, that of sight is doubtless the best calculated eventually to bring it back to the memory. Once we used to scribble in an album, now we just press a kodak button—and call it "bringing back a souvenir." It has never occurred to any one to note the sounds of a town, a port or a forest, in order to be able to recall them, or turn them into a musical

phrase ; nor does one take note of their odours to give the recipe to one's perfumer, and thus obtain an "evocation" at will. No, the strongest impression is that of the eyes, and the reproduction of that impression will affect our whole being more powerfully than the reproduction of the impression made on all or any of the other senses ; will best reconstitute the desired picture in the "dark room" of our memory—at the same time, strong as is the impression of the eyes, it is not the only impression one obtains. Recall some summer night on the Grand Canal, near the Rialto, after an excursion round the Isles, or towards the main sea: one's ears are full of music, one's nostrils of the scent of flowers—flowers that trail in the waters, songs that linger in the air. The indolent winds are all-too weak to carry off the odours of the place—the smell of the markets with its vegetables, the smell of the quay with its tar. Through the tactile sense, one recalls the winds blowing on face and hair, the rocking of the waves ; and these things mingle unconsciously, but deeply, with the visual impression received, so that, little by little, the sensations experienced through scent and sound and touch have a strong influence on the principal sensation—that of sight. If, then, the artist should create a work which is more acute, more penetrating than are the forms perceived by the sight alone, do not let us rush to the conclusion that he has borne false witness against Nature. Possibly the general impressson will be infinitely superior to an exact photographic reproduction, for the reason that this intense poetisation, obtained by means connected with the sight—by paint, in fact—may very well correspond with the intense poetisation with which hearing, scent and touch have supplemented the simple vision.

These waters of reflex, these misty veils mingling with the clouds of the air, these infinite shimmerings dividing the surface of the sea into close meshes, these breaks in the skies, produce, by their exaggeration and their accumulation, a sensation of the blowing wind. The hanging of these gondolas between sea and sky suggest the Djinn

> Qui sur un pied danse
> Au bout d'un flot.

The extraordinary lustre of these brocades, this gold, these precious stones, recall so vividly the heaps of flowers we had smelt in Venice, that the odours lurking in our memory awake and float up to us again. And then this freedom of movement, this extraordinary fantasy of palaces crowded together, as it were by a sort of maritime

Piranesi, evokes the idea or a life of melody, and our ears are full of the old Neapolitan refrains, sung in chorus by the sailors among the ropes. This fantastic aspect of Venice is not the Venice one sees through the eyes, as it were a photograph or a picture, faithful and true in tone ; yet it is far and away the best *impression* we have of Venice, as seen with our eyes, breathed by our lungs, heard with our ears—and drank in and absorbed, so to speak, by all our senses ; and such is Turner's work. . . .

And the same with one's impression of the Northern Seas, with their storm-beaten ports, reeking of salt and tar and coal ; cold, too, and wet and lashing—things which in painting can only be expressed by a representation of the wind, or, generally speaking, of the atmosphere, that is to say, by the most complicated play of clouds which break, vapours which sail through the air, and sails which belly 'neath the wind—visible witnesses of an invisible element.

To render all this is to be not idealist, but naturalist, whatever the methods employed. Doubtless, Turner's " documents " were quite insignificant—not more than forty oil studies and notes innumerable made on scraps of letter-paper, incoherent jottings, " quite unintelligible to others," as Cyrus Redding puts it. But these " documents " were true, and for him were full of revelations. None but Turner himself could have used them, but, using them, he painted more truly than any other.

" Look," said he to his travelling companion. " Look well ; you will see that again one of these days ; but let us go, let us go, the effect is passing away ! " Back in his studio, he reconstituted the scene, putting in many bits of perfectly true landscape which he had seen, and seen well.

There are two modes of being naturalistic : doing what Nature *has* realised, or doing what Nature *can* realise ; copying her results, or inspiring oneself by her laws. Turner perhaps did not paint any one of his pictures " after " Nature, and some hundreds he certainly painted without having Nature before his eyes. Is such a thing legitimate ? Is it absurd ? May it not be necessary sometimes ? Here we must distinguish clearly. An object which does not change its form in two or three hours, one which does not change colour in twenty or thirty minutes, which can be found every day, or nearly every day in the same place, unchanged in colour, and lighted in the same manner : a tree, for example, a house, a pool, a rock. The naturalist cannot do better than paint such things direct from Nature, from the first touch to the last, in accordance with the precept laid down by Ruskin for the P.R.B. in their early days.

Oil-Painting, about 1800-1810

A STORM IN THE MOUNTAINS

In the Collection of H. Darell-Brown, Esq.

Perhaps at the end, to get more freedom, he will repaint it—as Corot desired to do—without looking at Nature ; but if at any moment he should have need to assure himself of a form or of a tone, he looks, and as Nature is always there, incapable of change, her presence is a support to him. In *Crossing the Brook* or *The Bay of Baiæ* Turner could only gain by sticking as closely as possible to his model. He looked at the trees, instead of imagining them. But when it was a question—and with Turner it often was a question—of things which one cannot study from beginning to end because they pass away so quickly—forms and colours, fantasies which Nature makes and unmakes unceasingly, like the liquid embroidery of the waves, or the Penelopean tapestry, or the play of sunlight on watery vapours—then to produce your pictures direct from Nature is of no use whatever. Long before one has fixed the form of a wave it has broken on the strand ; the tint of a cloud—it has vanished into space ; a figure of vapour—" Fata morgana " has passed. . . . If one continue to put into juxtaposition a new form, and the old form which it contradicts, or add a fresh cloud tone to the precedent tone, which it obscures, one is doing what Nature does not do. From excess of conscientiousness in reproducing Nature, the artist has betrayed her.

On the other hand, the artist who, after having thoroughly absorbed the *laws* of water in movement, the groupings of clouds and the reflections of oblique light on the screen of vapours in long observation of the sea, and after having taken copious notes, returns to his studio, retains in his memory the forms which have most strongly impressed him. Knowing how Nature contrives to set forth her spectacle, he acts accordingly. That which she has created he re-creates. That which she has stammered he says outright, and thus he realises something which perhaps he has not seen, something which perhaps Nature has not accomplished, but which she could accomplish, something which it were possible one might see. Whereas he who laboriously juxtaposes a crowd of veritable, but successive, effects, depicts an *ensemble* such as Nature, which is one and harmonious, never produces, can never produce, an *ensemble* such as one can never witness.

What was Turner's method of observation ? Continuous ? No, but intense and continually reminiscent. One knows his life—that of a recluse, full of monotony, buried within the darkest house in the dingiest part of London, varied by rare flights to the English seaports, or to the land of Sun. As for his surroundings, we know what they were too, for his biographers have described for us, too

often, perhaps, the sordid house whence never a green leaf was to be seen, nor often the sky itself—a house so desolate that one might have thought some great crime had been committed therein; a house at which the very tax-collector might have ceased to call. "Some one," remarked the policeman, "is supposed to live there." And "Some one" did live there in fact: some one endowed with a visual memory so vast, and with a reactive force so great, that he transformed this foggy, smoky place into one of radiant horizons, thrusting back the walls around him so far into space and time that neither the East nor the ages past ever equalled in splendour the luminous projections of his seething brain. And not only was this seclusion the reverse of injurious to his imaginings; it was even indispensable to them. The art criticism of to-day holds it as an element, and almost as a condition, of success that the artist should live in the midst of the surroundings he describes or paints. Now this opinion, banal as it is—so banal as to have penetrated as far as the theses laid down at the Sorbonne—is nevertheless radically false. The history of art flatly gives it the lie. None, assuredly, painted the splendour of the Continent as did this *insulaire*, nor the movement of the seas like this recluse. He was for ever thinking of these things—and although he did not know them *physically*, his spirit was never absent therefrom. Here we touch on one of the profoundest traits in the British character. The English are a race for whom the Continent is a sort of Promised Land, the home of the Ideal, a Canaan with its gigantic grapes, something akin to what in art and poetry China was for a long time to Japan, that other satellite-isle gravitating around that other Continent. The English do not tell you this—in perfect good faith they believe the contrary. But their art, their works, betray their secret thoughts by showing where their imagination lies—Italy, the shores of Provence, Spain, the mountains of Switzerland and the Tyrol, the lands of the olive, the orange and the grape. All that England does not possess haunts the Englishman's spirit. For him the ideal is there—and especially in the sunshine, in the twilight, in those violent burning tones which never show themselves on his isle, save by accident, and then only by a superficial effect of light, not as local colour, properly belonging to the objects it reveals. Now, that which is rare is precious. When Ruskin describes the paternal garden where his childhood was spent he uses a word which sounds strangely in the Southerner's ear: "Clustered pearl," he says, "and pendant ruby, joyfully discoverable under the large leaves *that looked like Vine!*" The Vine! Here is a splendid far-away symbol,

promise or a nature and a civilisation, gay, smiling and perfumed. Thus the promise of the ancient world is contained entire in the little wild olive tree sprouting with difficulty neath a rock on the hill-side of the Rhône, a hundred kilometres above Provence. The men who will attach so much sentiment to so slight a thing are not those who will let go aught of the impressions they take in presence of the land of their dreams. They will translate them on the spot, wholly and entirely. On reaching Venice the English artist—especially at the beginning of the nineteenth century—coming from so far and for so short a time, has but one idea, which is to carry away all Venice in his eyes and in his heart. Compare him for a moment with his Italian *confrère*. The Venetian quits his *calle*, strolls along, looks, admires; but he will find it all there on the morrow, the Giudecca in the same place, the same domes curving against the sky, the same gondolas on the canal, and the same waters repeating the forms and the hues of the same palaces in the lisping of their reflections. He is in no hurry to reproduce all this; he simply enjoys it. He lets his fancy rock idly on these waters which will never dry up, lets it ripen in this sunlight which shall never be put out. His love, as it were, is too sure to be keenly felt—and he turns away to eat an ice at Florian's this afternoon which will have no end! Then he goes home . . . having done nothing. The Englishman, for his part, knows well the afternoon must end, knows that soon he must be back again in the yellow fog, in the dense cold atmosphere. So he inhales, devours, absorbs through all the papillæ of his imagination. He wants this sun; he grips this vision. His strength springs from his desire, his faculties increased tenfold by his despair. His genius is born of his love.

Thus, art does not spring necessarily from the *milieu* wherein the creator *lives*. Most of the great landscapists of the century—Corot, Rousseau, Turner—were born in big towns, children of home-staying folk, dwelling in gloomy little shops.

The things one feels most deeply in life are not those one has *livea* most: they are those one would have most ardently *desired to live*, those encountered in some moment of ecstasy, those one has had to abandon for ever.

The art which springs from the deepest sources of the human heart is not necessarily an emanation of one's surroundings, a product of the race, in a word, an emanation of life. On the contrary, art is often the magic ring placed by the artist on his own finger and on the finger of those who desire it in order to forget the world in which they live. Often it is a revenge against the littlenesses, the

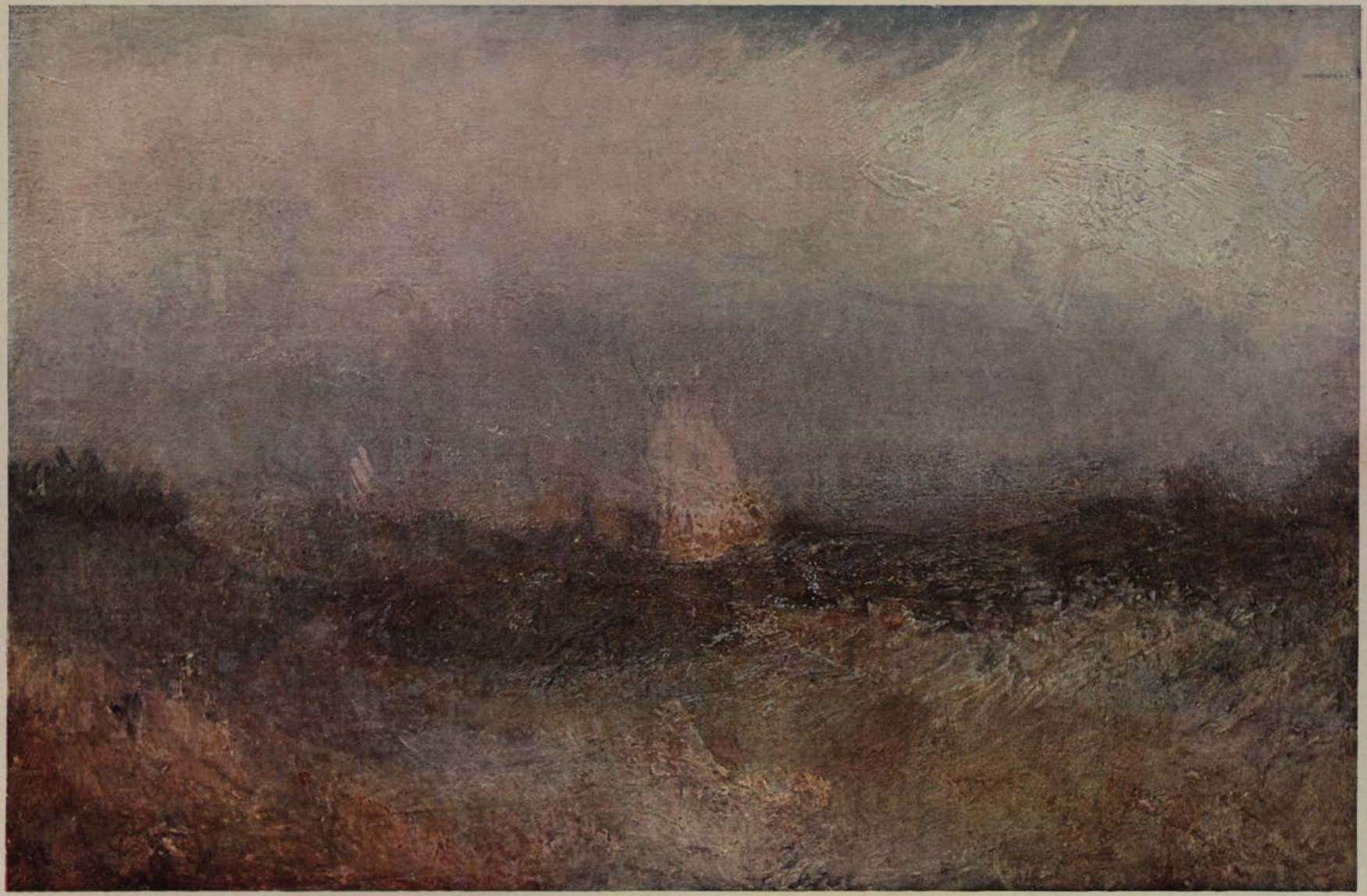
chances, the vulgarities of one's surroundings, a rebellion against the tyrannies of race, a resistance of the tendency of an epoch. Art is a retaliation on Life.

Withal, Turner is English—English in his subjects, English in his passion for Nature, English in his colour. His foremost subject is the sea, not the mere grey or blue line of the horizon setting off a landscape, or some unused lagoon, wherein are generated and multiply the puny lives of an inferior animal existence: 'tis the open, redoubtable, ever-varying sea, at times under control although in motion, occasionally narrowed in the confines of a port, but with an outlet on the infinite. He has gone in quest of the moments when the water is itself, when it possesses a physiognomy, is not a simple track cloven by ships, or a mirror into which one gazes; but when it is at one and the same time an obstacle and a help, akin to an uncertain character, and quivering with a passion that is unstable and restless, yet proper to it. It is, moreover, the great highway by which England communicates with the world's immensity, and through which the British Empire is in touch with its colonies. This passion for the Ocean conceals seemingly the vague desire or realising the poet's aspiration:

> Faire une ceinture au monde
> Du sillon de notre vaisseau. . . .

He loves as one might a horse, nay better than a horse, the ship which carries him; he describes it, sings it, portrays its greatness, ways, decadence, in short, its life, and sheds tears over its death as over that of a living thing. Only an Englishman could conceive the idea of painting the *Fighting Téméraire* being towed along to the dockyard where it will be broken up into firewood, gate-posts, and, perchance, relics dyed with the blood of the victors of Trafalgar. And, on the evening when going down the river towards Greenwich, and meeting this funeral procession, Turner's friend remarked to him, "This, Turner, is a subject for you," they understood each other, for two British souls had communed. Turner is guided by his deep-lying national affinity even in the execution of his antique subjects, in his score of visions of Carthage, which make him, so to speak, the Flaubert of painting. The world of the ancients was separated by inaccessible mountains, and united by the sea. It was divided by various customs, traditions, and languages, but united by one and the same sea, which imperceptibly and by degrees, created simultaneously with one climate, one spirit, identical commercial customs and palaces, similar manners, and a common language. Things were different in the interior; barriers stood between the

Oil-Colour Impression, Late Period, about 1842



A SEA-PIECE

In the Collection of James Orrock, Esq., R.I.

LIBRARY
OF THE
BOMBAY
BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

peoples. It was on land that imagination called forth the strange populations described by Pliny, the Pigmies, Thibians, and others. The sea, on the contrary, was geographically well known; and quite recently a French *savant*, Victor Bérard, has demonstrated that Homer's "Odyssey" is geographically far more exact than hitherto credited. Even nowadays, a stroll among the ruins of Ostia is sufficient to make the traveller realise the importance of that Mediterranean which conveyed grain and precious stuffs, whose waters transported melodious languages and songs, and disseminated creeds. In those days the sea was looked upon as the highway of all progress. From Æneas to St. Augustine and St. Monica, the entire ancient world, thyrsus or cross in hand, turned its gaze towards the sea. Nowadays, a solitary nation experiences the same feeling towards it, and with the same intensity: England. The painter of the sea was of necessity to be born in England. And, if he drew his subject from antiquity, it was bound to be imbued with the soul-state which became that of the first Christian churches, or the city which, more than any other, incarnates and embodies the maritime power of antiquity: Carthage.

Again, Turner is English in his passion for colour. This passion is made manifest in all English works, from the eighteenth century to the present day, when placed in juxtaposition with the contemporaneous paintings of other countries. Such has been the goal of English endeavour, of English criticism. When Ruskin chides some Continental painter, it is ever because of his lack of colour. The English were alone capable, in their strange colour-appetite, of discovering that the ancients, that Titian and the rest, originally made a glaring and crude use of colour, and that the softness and soberness nowadays so admired are due to the unforeseen action of two great masters to whom one always forgets to give credit: "Time and varnish."* It is among Englishmen that Delacroix, to be followed by Monet and Pissarro, went to seek their ideas for the renovation of continental art by colour, or, to be exact, their colour technique. In order to attain it, they have stretched the limits of good taste and gone beyond them, with the result of sometimes creating horrible cacophonies. But, even among the best English painters, there exists, in that direction, fallings-off never to be met with in the works of good continental colourists. Not once does Rousseau imitate one of Turner's false notes. Less great, he is more even. On the other hand, when this mad striving has attained its object, when the colours, each one of which taken separately is glaring,

* Sir John Everett Millais.

succeed, being equally vivid in tone, and harmonising in their violence, an altogether powerful and original glare is the result. It is man's most daring attempt to enter into a struggle with Nature, and the most rugged outburst of passion which has ever sprung from the human heart. The result is *English Painting*. It is Ford Maddox Brown, Watts and Blake. The outcome: monstrosities and transfigurations, follies and miracles: Turner.

Turner was the first of the Impressionists, and after a lapse of eighty years he remains the greatest, at least in the styles he has treated. That Impressionism came from England is proved by the letters of Delacroix, and demonstrated by M. Paul Signac in his pamphlet on "Neo-Impressionism"; it has been conclusively established by Mr. Wynford Dewhurst in THE STUDIO. It is a fact which the reader of Ruskin, and especially of his "Elements of Drawing," written in 1856, must be cognisant of. Turner is the father of the Impressionists. Their discoveries are his. He first saw that Nature is composed in a like degree of colours and of lines, and, in his evolution, the rigid and settled lines of his early method gradually melt away and vanish in the colours. He sought to paint the atmosphere, the envelopment of coloured objects seen at a distance, rather than the things enveloped; and he quickly realised that the atmosphere could not be expressed, except through the infinite parcelling out of the things which Claude Lorrain drew in a solid grouping, and painted *en bloc*. He shredded the clouds. He took the massive and admirable masses, the *cumuli* of Ruysdael, of Hobbema, of Van de Velde, picked the threads out of them, and converted them into a myriad-shaded charpie, which he entrusted to the winds of heaven. Between the glint of the sun and the mirror-like reflections of the waves, palaces lost their shape, to preserve only, as in the case of gems, their brilliant sheen. Henceforth, ships possessed a motion common to all, or, so to speak, "dorsal" one. Colour triumphed over line disrupted in every direction. Turner's next discovery was that shade is a colour like the rest, and that it is not necessary to represent it by a sombre rendering of the tone. He was led to this when contemplating sea effects, where light bursts forth, without, however, any great opposition on the part of shade. There is very little shade on water, or, if preferred, there is so much of it, and so little of it, that it is impossible to come to any definite determination of it as exemplified in the black *repoussoirs* occupying the foreground in all old landscapes. Gradually did Turner wipe these sets-off from his canvases. Perceiving that Nature could produce light, without having recourse to sombre

contrasts, he, imitating her, sought to dispense with them. He evolved from the luminous effect by contrast, that is to say from opposing black to white, to the effect by *duplication*, *i.e.*, by coloured opposings. Of each shade he made a quick colour.

That is not all. This very colour which he brought out more strongly by contrast, he wished it more live than any one before had ever made it.

With this object in view, he conceived the idea of laying it on in its entire purity, by imperceptible dots or lines, dividing the same tone into an infinity of diversations juxtaposed with so great a skill that, however glaring they may be when viewed at close range, blend in perfect harmony on being looked at from a certain distance. 'Tis the *division of colour*, and the *optical blending*.

Here we have, not only prophesied, but applied, the three discoveries of Impressionism : Nature, rather colours than lines ; shades themselves, colours ; colour expressed by the division of tone. Thus does Turner, emanating from Claude, become the founder of Impressionism. But, he absorbs everything : his predecessors and his successors. He dispenses one from looking at Claude Lorrain and Claude Monet. " He has gone as far as man can go," said Gérard of Delacroix. " He is a man who walks on the roofs." Of Turner it can be said that he leaned over the precipice. No one could lean further without feeling giddiness and falling below. To see his last paintings, his desperate, mad, ferocious striving after light, one imagines seeing one of those Alpinists, whose sad fate each year chronicles, who have fallen into a chasm, for having sought to gather some rare and inaccessible flower.

On the point of closing these lines, I find I have not spoken of any painting of Turner's. It is because I have spoken of them all, and that, in the case of a genius like his, it is impossible to make a faithful and minute transcription, no more than he himself made from Nature ; one may merely attempt to give an impression. Nevertheless, if one is to select a work as being central and typical of his life, one combining the most accurate observation, and the most intense creative power, I would say : go and see the *Approach to Venice*, with its sea and sky of infinite depth, its background of pale-green light, shining betwixt the two like a vegetal astre, sown with blood-hued spots, its crystalline kiss given in the bosom of the delicate haze to the slumbering waters by the lips of sunset, its gondolas gliding between pellucid waters, with their red cabins and their golden ornaments, from Tusina towards Venice, between the phantoms of the Giudecca. All the benefactions heaped on humanity

by Turner are there to be found. To approach Venice is to approach the city without streets, without vehicles, noises; the city of museums resplendent with Carpaccio's and Tintoretto's masterpieces, of churches brilliant with metallic splendour, of sanctuaries panelled with gold and lit up with mysterious lamps, and of palaces suspended from stone lacework. But nothing will be found more beautiful than the *Approach* itself. No robe from Tintoretto's brush will be found to possess the splendour of the gondolas conveying us. No Titian—that of the Mountains of Cadore, the presence of which we divine, no nimbus about the head of a saint will equal that sun, no purple these skies, no prayer the infinite sweetness of the dream experienced during those brief, delicious moments. Nothing will be found to compare with the distant vision of that city which, on the horizon, seems to be too beautiful ever to be reached, and appears to recede from the traveller's barque—

Ainsi que Dèle sur la mer,

gilded like youth, silent as dreams, and like happiness unattainable. And yet Turner is, in one respect, absolutely realistic: in his skies. He has transformed the trees, reconstructed the towns, upset rivers, arbitrarily raised or demolished mountains; he has faithfully reproduced skies. No one among the most realistic has given a more correct presentment of them. And the reason is that heaven is the only region of Nature which modern man, with his industrialism, is unable to disturb or alter. Landscape painters, who for fifty years past have given their lives to love, to exalt the beauty of the earth, its fields, coasts, and forests, yearly witness the disappearance of some beautiful feature they have worshipped. The following words apply to a certain degree, in this epoch of industrialism, to landscape-painters: "Lay not up for yourselves treasure on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasure in Heaven. Where your treasure lies, there will your heart be also." There was Turner's æsthetic treasure. There was his heart. All the torches which have shed a flood of new light on Art—that of Delacroix in 1825, those of the Impressionists in 1870—have in turn been lit at his flame. And it is his flame also that casts a light over the most humble and obscure who open their eyes on Nature. I see them pass by in the twilight, between the Cévennes and the Alps, as I write these pages; and the falling shadows warn me that it is getting late, and that the day consecrated to a dream has come to its close.

ROBERT DE LA SIZERANNE.

O 1. Oil-Painting, Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1800

DOLBADERN CASTLE, NORTH WALES

Given to the Royal Academy as the Painter's Diploma Picture

O 2. Oil-Painting, Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1800

THE FIFTH PLAGUE OF EGYPT
In the Collection of Sir Frederick L. Cook, Bart., M.P.

O 3. Oil-Painting, 1805; in the National Gallery, London

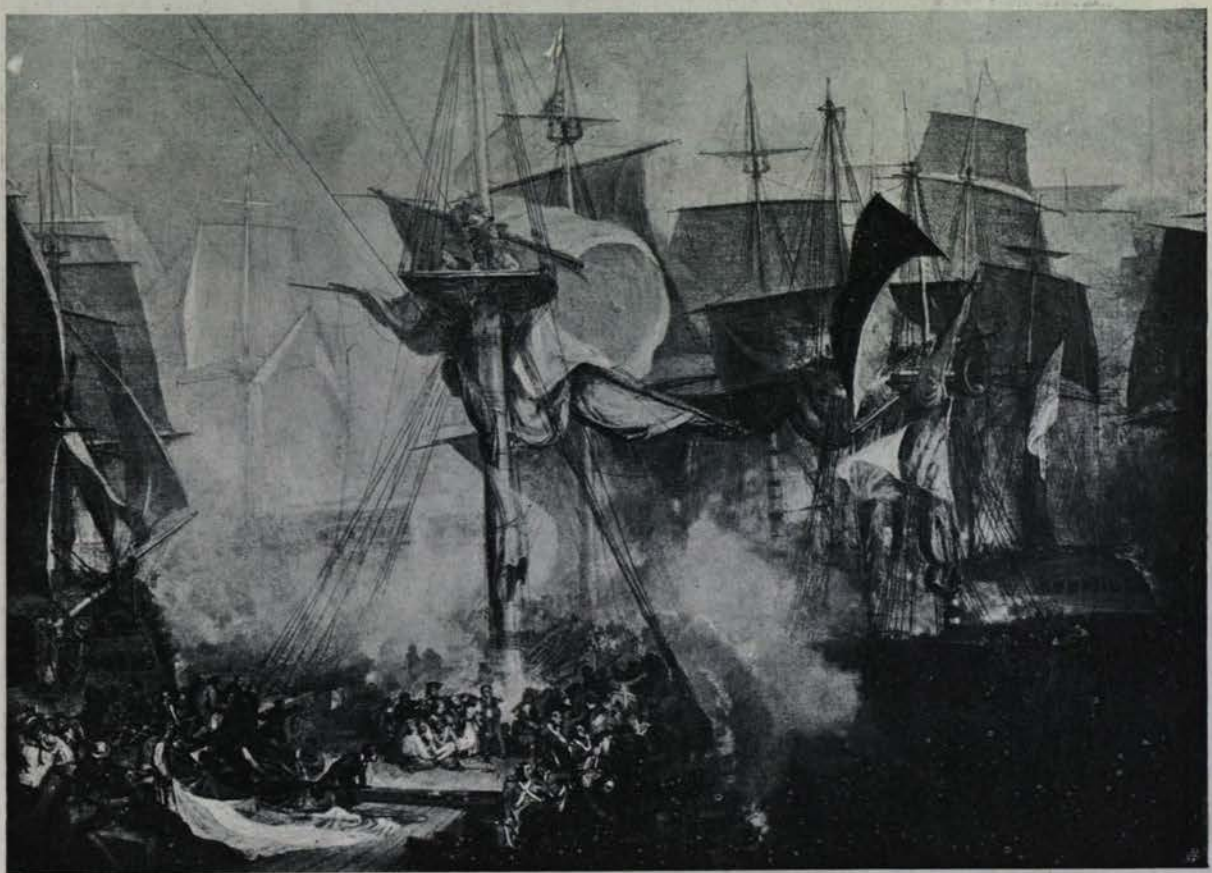
THE SHIPWRECK

Reproduced from a Photograph by the Autotype Co., New Oxford St.

O 4. Oil-Painting, about 1809

CONWAY CASTLE — In the Collection of the Duke of Westminster

O 5. Oil-Painting, Exhibited at the British Institution, 1808



THE DEATH OF NELSON, OCTOBER 21, 1805 — In the National Gallery, London

THE GODDESS OF DISCORD IN THE GARDEN OF THE HESPERIDES

Reproduced from a Photograph by the Autotype Co., New Oxford St., London

O 7. Oil-Painting, about 1812; in the Farnley Hall Collection

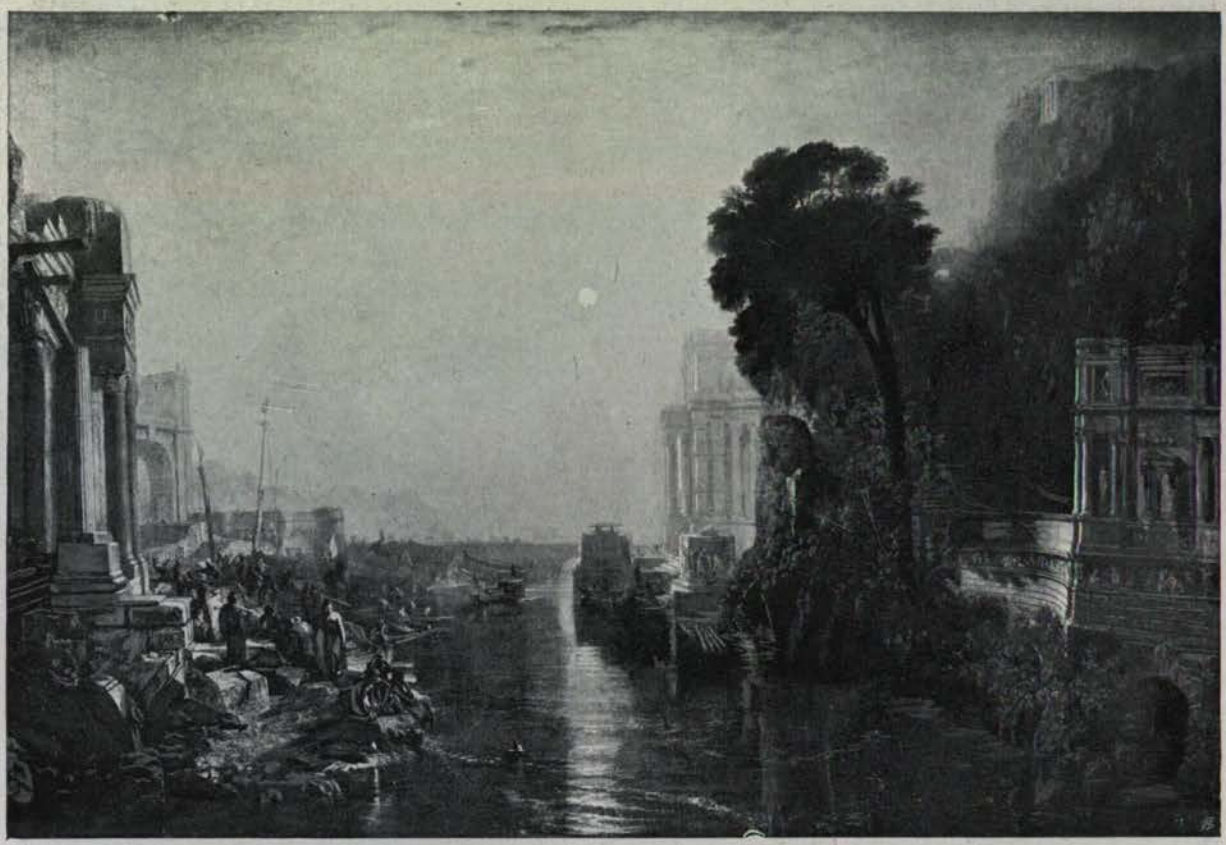
PILOT HAILING A SMACK IN STORMY WEATHER

Reproduced from a Photograph lent by Mr. George Allen

O 8. Oil-Painting, 1806

THE WINDMILL AND LOCK — In the Collection of Sir Frederick L. Cook, Bart.

O 9. Oil-Painting, Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1815



DIDO BUILDING CARTHAGE — In the National Gallery, London

O 10. Oil-Painting in the National Gallery, London; Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1815

CROSSING THE BROOK

Reproduced from a Photograph by the Autotype Co., New Oxford St., London

O 11. Oil-Painting in the National Gallery, London; Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1823

THE BAY OF BAIÆ, WITH APOLLO AND THE SIBYL

Reproduced from a Photograph by the Autotype Co., New Oxford St., London

ULYSSES DERIDING POLYPHEMUS

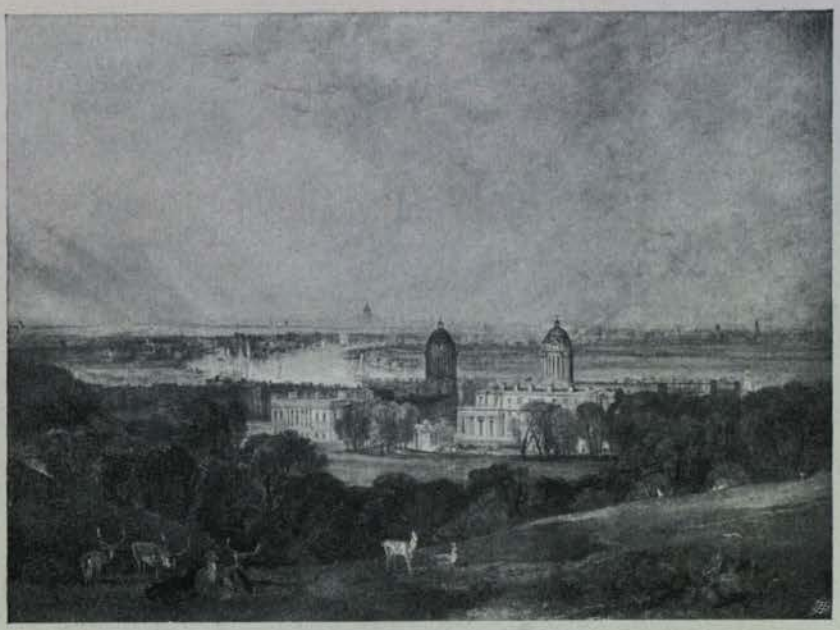
Reproduced from a Photograph by the Autotype Co., New Oxford St., London

O 13. Oil-Painting in South Kensington Museum; Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1831

VESSEL IN DISTRESS OFF YARMOUTH

Reproduced from a Photograph lent by Mr. George Allen

O 14. Oil-Painting, 1809



LONDON, FROM GREENWICH — In the National Gallery, London

O 15. Oil-Painting in the National Gallery, London; Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1833

VENICE: CANALETTI PAINTING — Reproduced from a Photograph by the Autotype Co., New Oxford St., London

O 16. Oil-Painting in the National Gallery, London; Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1832

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE—ITALY ... Reproduced from a Photograph by the Autotype Co.

O 17. Oil-Painting in the National Gallery, London; Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1839

AGRIPPINA LANDING WITH THE ASHES OF GERMANICUS Reproduced from a Photograph by the Autotype Co.

O 18. Oil-Painting

A HARVEST HOME — In the National Gallery, London

O 19. Oil-Painting in the National Gallery, London; Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1839

THE FIGHTING "TÉMÉRAIRE" — Reproduced from a Photograph by the Autotype Co., New Oxford St., London

O 20. Oil-Painting in the National Gallery, London; Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1843

THE "SUN OF VENICE" GOING TO SEA

Reproduced from a Photograph by the Autotype Co., New Oxford St., London

O 21. Oil-Painting in the National Gallery, London; Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1843

APPROACH TO VENICE; or ST. BENEDETTO, LOOKING TOWARDS FUSINA

Reproduced from a Photograph by the Autotype Co., New Oxford St., London

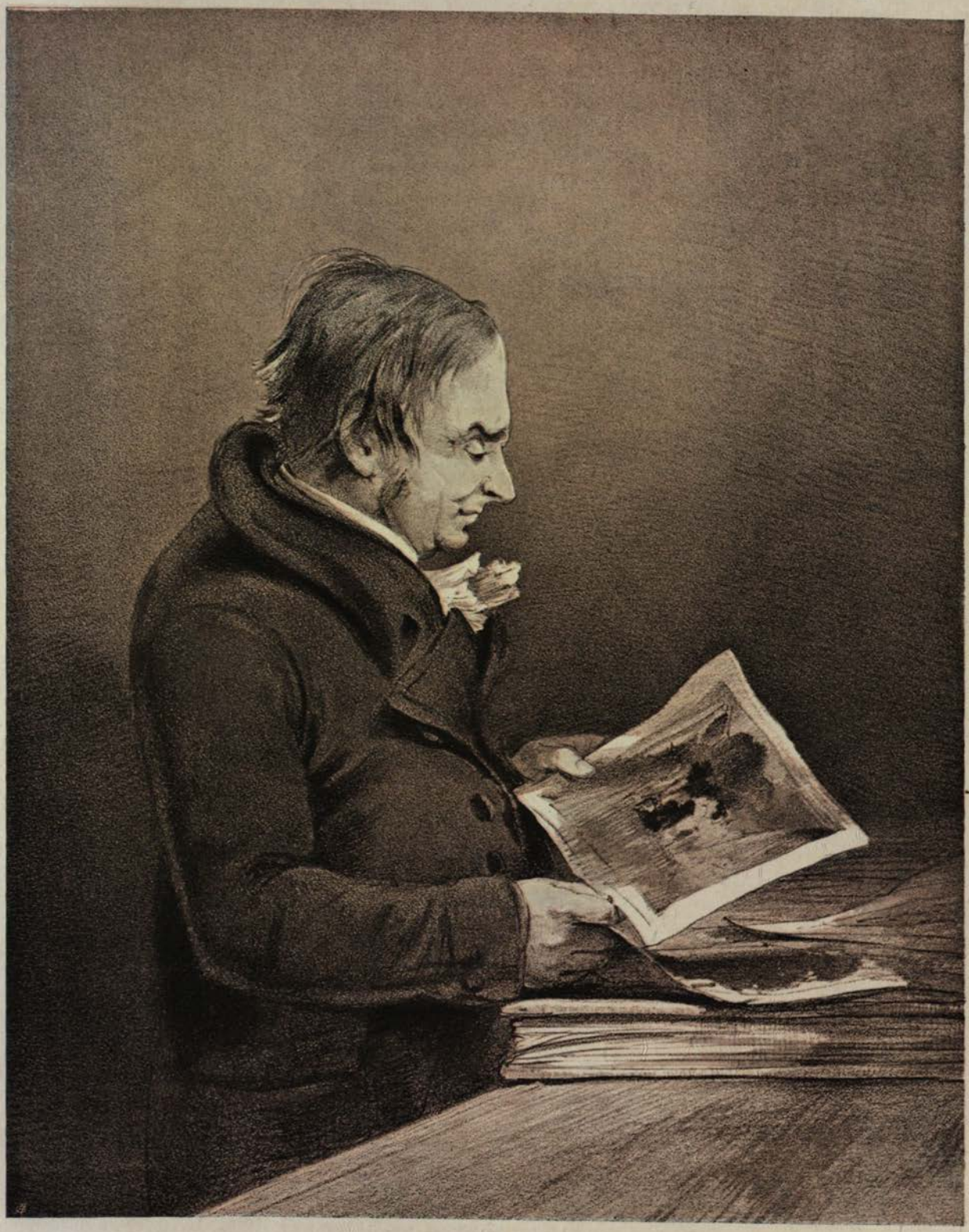
O 22. Oil-Painting, Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1850

MERCURY SENT TO ADMONISH ÆNEAS — In the National Gallery, London

O 23. Oil-Painting in the National Gallery, London; Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1844

RAIN, STEAM, AND SPEED—THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY — From a Photograph by the Autotype Co.

From the Lithograph of J. T. Smith's Drawing



PORTRAIT OF J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.

In the Collection of C. Mallord W. Turner, Esq.

TURNER'S MONOCHROMES AND EARLY WATER-COLOURS

HE design of this short article is to give a few hints that may serve to guide young students to some knowledge of Turner's monochromes and early water-colours. The first words of advice that one feels called upon to give are words of caution. The young student, before he begins to work, must take to heart the fact that the genius of Turner has two kinds of difficulties: namely, those proper to its wondrous complexity, and those which have been imposed upon it by writers who have made it a theme of perfervid prose. Indeed, when one thinks of the literary ecstasies awakened by Turner's greatness, one cannot but marvel at the uncritical bias of mind that intrudes into the painter's domain of art the emotions belonging to literature. It will be remembered that Turner, in his declining years, after a long life of struggle and success, fell under two bad influences; the one was found in the gibes and jokes of *Punch* and the readers of *Punch*, the other made itself widely popular in the poetical transports of Ruskin's genius as a man of letters. The first of these two influences hurt Turner's feelings, while the second harmed him as a painter by importing into pictorial criticism an excess of literary sentiment against which there would certainly be a reaction. It may be said, indeed, that Ruskin's extraordinary command over moving words produced a literary atmosphere that settled itself between Turner's pictures and those who wished to study them. Any one who was touched by Ruskin's glamour of phrase imagined that he, or she, understood and appreciated Turner himself; whereas the psychological response was made not to the art of Turner, but to the emotion of the man of letters. And thus it became recognised at last, among good judges of art, that the most eloquent passages in Ruskin mistook poetical descriptions for art criticism and appealing fancies for proven facts. In other words, Ruskin made poems out of Turner, just as Turner made poems out of nature; and there was and is little actual relation between the poems and their titles. The Venice of reality and Turner's Venice are known to be different; but the distinction between them is not more marked, nor less transformed by temperament and imagination, than the contrast existing between certain

phases of Turner's greatness and the literary descriptions of them that Ruskin invented and popularised. Remember, then, that Ruskin is to be looked upon as an artist in words, always fascinated by the beauty of his language and always anxious to make an effect in his own craftsmanship. Had he felt Turner's art as art—felt it, that is to say, with all the intensity he laid claim to—he would not have written about it with such a flood of words. For the strongest emotions of an æsthetic kind incline men to be silent rather than eloquent. This is why painters themselves express their criticisms in brief sentences and frequently in single words. Ruskin, to be sure, was in love with his subject; but he rose from his knees before the adored one, and then wrote his poems. All this applies not to the brief critical notes that Ruskin penned at times in a free-and-easy unpretentious manner, but to all those parts of his works wherein the fervour and the beauty of his language have won for him, quite unjustly, a commanding influence as an art critic.

It was necessary to speak thus frankly of the influence of Ruskin, for we owe to it, or rather to a reaction against it, the indifference existing in many quarters to the art of Turner. Hot fits are followed by cold, and at the present time Turner is not studied in the way that he deserves to be. Many a student feels that the great landscape-painter cannot be grasped without much puzzling of the brain over problems of ethics, copybook maxims and morals, and all the other shreds and patches of esoteric claptrap with which so many writers on Turner have bedecked their critical faculties. But let the student take heart of grace. Turner was not a moralist nor a man of letters. He was a great master of the brush, and as such he may be studied with only that degree of difficulty which gives zest to work. For my own part, I do not feel in the least inclined to let loose even one sky-rocket of eloquence. The genius of Turner is so slow in its development, and so prolific and resourceful in technical methods, that one finds it hard enough to state at all clearly the points of interest that appeal first of all to any one who is curious about style.

The monochromes and the early water-colours are bracketed together in this section of the present volume, partly because the early water-colours have much in common with studies in gradations of one colour, and partly because the art of Turner was built up on the knowledge acquired by constant sketching with the point, and with simple washes of colour over a point-drawing. It is well known, or ought to be, that Turner's studies from nature very rarely took the form of elaborate sketches in oil-colour; and there seems to be no doubt that even his outdoor practice in water-colour was seldom

carried beyond the stage of memoranda. The multitudes of sketches in the National Gallery are for the most part of a slight allusive nature, showing that Turner had no other wish than to be useful to himself when painting in his studio. He had no thought of the critics, no thought of the public, when he went alone on his wanderings and noted, with a rapidity that seems quite miraculous, those essential things of art that nature revealed to him in her storms, in her hills, mountains, and valleys, in the sea, and, again, in the chromatic splendours of the sun's action upon colours out of doors.
The student, then, should remember this private and confidential character of Turner's sketches in black and white. I myself have a feeling of shyness when I study them, as though I were prying into the painter's diary. With Cotman, on the other hand, one is at home immediately, for one sees that his sketching work had ever the ulterior purpose of a work of art. It was not intended for Cotman's use alone, but was made complete, so that it entered forthwith into the public domain of the world's art treasures. As a consequence, we should not draw any comparison between the different aims that Turner and Cotman had in view in their monochromes. Turner's wonderful set of brown drawings for *Liber Studiorum* were not only made as guides for the engravers; they were turned out more or less in haste, for Turner knew that the etching was to be done by himself, and that the actual engraving would be carried out either by his own hand or else under his vigilant supervision. He could thus afford to indicate what he wanted without producing a design completely finished in all its parts. Very different was the aim of Cotman when he conceived and brought to completion such lyrical and wise drawings as *Breaking the Clod* and *The Shadowed Stream.*
The brown studies for *Liber Studiorum* are illustrated here by five plates. There is *Holy Island Cathedral* (M W 28) with its fine simplicity, with the upward growth and spring of its graceful masonry, and with its intermingling of Saxon and Norman characteristics. The illustration of *Mâcon*—a subject not engraved in Turner's life, but since translated by Mr. Frank Short—is a sketch composition of great attractiveness; and one remarks in it a trait of frequent occurrence in Turner, namely, the unequal manner in which the artist dwells on the different parts of a sketch design. The trees on the right and the distant bridge were the points he lingered over and brought most closely to the effect which he would aim at in the engraving. The *Grande Chartreuse*, with its noble seriousness, and the *Sportsmen in a Wood*, with its fanciful lightness and rather scattered gracefulness, speak clearly for themselves; but one may

draw particular attention to the feathery character of the pen-draughtsmanship in the second composition.

Despite the foolish and stubborn old belief that pictures in water-colour are of less artistic value than oil-paintings, it is still recognised by many that water-colour was Turner's favourite medium, and that his genius lives in it more vividly than it does in most of his oil-paintings. These latter have suffered much from neglect and much from the careless manner in which Turner made use of unsafe pigments and methods of execution. For the sake of a transitory brilliance of tone and colour he condemned many of his later pictures to a downgoing career. In water-colour, on the contrary, he was always careful and fastidious, sparing neither time nor pains to produce in a loving manner the best results that his materials would give him. And these results have endured with but little change, except in those drawings which have been exposed to damp or to a light too strong for their exceeding delicacy. This is one reason why the student of Turner should be unsparing in the attention he pays to the master's water-colours. Not that this reason is the only one. Turner's final aims in oil-painting were suggested by the special genius of water-colour—that genius which renders water-colour so responsive to the mysteries of atmosphere and of the sun's light. And one other point is worth recalling here. In Turner's drawings we may follow the whole evolution of English water-colour, beginning with the early stained manner that he inherited from Sandby, Rooker, Hearne, Dayes, and J. R. Cozens. After this stained manner in neutral tints we come to a style based on Girtin's, and we soon meet with such still-life pictures of birds and fish as William Hunt himself could not have excelled; until at last, after many other changes and transformations, Turner's genius brings us to those wonderful fantasies of Venetian radiance that carry impressionism to the highest point it has yet reached in water-colour painting. Mr. Brabazon has given us some fine Turner-like impressions, but he would be the first to lift his hat to the great discoverer of that realm of colour and light in which his own gifts have found something new and delightful to record.

As Turner's art in water-colour is so varied in its appeal, it has been deemed necessary to illustrate its changes in an abundant manner; and we cannot do better than turn to the reproductions in half-tone, so that we may be able to follow the first stages of its progress.

The first illustration, representing *Folly Bridge and Bacon's Tower*, was drawn from an engraving in Turner's twelfth year, and tinted with an ease and assurance very rare in a boy so young. There

Water-Colour, about 1795-96

OLD HOUSES, SHREWSBURY

In the Collection of Gerald Robinson, Esq.

is atmosphere in the sky, and a really remarkable feeling for the soft cloud-forms that the English sky often gives after a fall of rain. The buildings, too, though somewhat prim in the rendering of the details, stand upright and show us already that Turner's delight in "the frozen music of architecture" did not first come to him in the office of his good friend Mr. Hardwick, who received him as a pupil about two years later—probably in 1789. Remark, also, that the boy Turner, in his choice of this subject, forecast his future in water-colour with the motives of composition that appealed to him most strongly in after years. When did he cease to love bridges and towers, or boats filled with animated figures, or water with the delightfully subtle problems of its reflections and its surface play? The tower, in this early drawing, is somewhat dwarfed by the ugly cottage on the left, and this error in the composition is rendered more emphatic by the boat which brings the cottage more prominently to the eye. Yet one feels none the less that the tower was the main point of interest to the boy's sympathies, and the easy way in which it is made to unite in composition with the bridge proves very clearly that Turner, at the age of twelve, fully grasped the principal artistic merits of the engravings from which he worked. One last point may be dwelt upon for a second. The reflection of the sailing-boat is done with skill and tenderness: it shows already a personal observation similar to that which, in or about the same year, caused him to mirror the sky in the window-panes of the finished drawings that he made for architects. One architect, Mr. Dobson by name, objected to this truthful touch of observation, and told Turner that the window-bars must be painted white and the panes dark grey. "It will spoil my drawing," Turner replied. "Rather that than my art," said the architect. The lad complied, and then left Mr. Dobson.

The Alpine landscape, in the second illustration, marks a whole stage of transition in Turner's youthful attitude to art. He works here under the guidance of J. R. Cozens, that great master of the neutral style in water-colour who first discovered to his countrymen the sweet dignity and mystery that art could find in mountain scenery. Constable, it is said, regarded Cozens as the greatest genius that ever touched landscape—an excess of ardour, no doubt, but yet sufficiently truthful to account for the ascendency of Cozens over Turner's impressionable mind. It is not quite certain in what year he began to exercise himself

in Cozens' manner; but I am inclined to believe it was in 1793, the year in which he joined the famous drawing-class held by Dr. Monro in his house in the Adelphi Terrace. This illustration may be looked upon, I think, as among the first of Turner's efforts to get at the secrets of style in the work of his great contemporary; for there is a want of grasp in the technical methods, and the lines formed by the hills are not such as the eye of Cozens would have tolerated. Viewed alone, they are not lacking in delicacy; but when considered in relation to the sky and the hills beyond, the form they make is too much like that of a bowl to be pleasant. Very much better from every standpoint is the lovely drawing of *Tintern Abbey*, produced in the same year (1793) and represented in the third illustration. This graceful and rhythmical piece of architecture cannot be studied with too much attention. It owes much, doubtless, to the knowledge which Turner acquired from Sandby and from Hearne; but in spite of that it has a mingling of strength and elegance which belongs to Turner himself, and not to any one whose art he invaded and conquered. Now there is no surer test of a young painter's strength than his structural rendering of a great pile of masonry. When one looks at the architecture drawn by the average artist one says to one's self, "This fellow started his work with the weather-cock, and grew so tired before he reached the ground that his building lost bulk and substance the nearer it came to its foundations." With Turner, on the other hand, every mass of stone-work has a downward pressure, and rests securely on its basis. Indeed, Turner's architecture seems to be built rather than drawn, and its grace is all the more irresistible because the eye feels that, like Antæus, it gains in strength and majesty from the closeness of its contact with the earth.

The student should take note of this characteristic of Turner's architecture, and should follow its development in such wonderful drawings as the famous *Interior of Ely Cathedral;* or, again, in the admirable view of *Lincoln*, bearing the date 1795, which may be examined in the fourth reproduction. De Wint, in his prime, painted the same great cathedral from pretty nearly the same place; but his large water-colour, now at South Kensington, has masonry of tinted pasteboard, and is much less interesting in other respects than Turner's work at the age of twenty. It is not generally known that Turner's early passion for architecture showed itself in some interiors of a humble kind, and in the fifth

illustration may be seen an exquisitely finished study of the underground kitchen in Maiden Lane, where an old woman, said to be Turner's mother, sits crooning over a fire, surrounded with an orderly disorder of household things. It is a little picture, as fine in handling as a work by Steenwick, but nobler in its homeliness and gentle pathos. The actual workmanship, though rubbed by years of wear and tear, is still full of those qualities, or endless subtleties of variation, known among artists as "infinity." The light and shade are managed with consummate skill, and the treatment of the still-life objects could not well be bettered. Contrast this little piece with the waterfall on the same page, so that the difference between them may keep your mind alert to the variousness of Turner's sympathy and observation.

On the next page, in the reproduction of *Warkworth Castle*, painted in 1799, a new Turner manifests himself—a Turner strongly under the influence of his friend and leader, Tom Girtin, and yet giving us a foretaste of that intricate design and that pageantry of storm effects which in later years made him a true dramatist in the interpretation of natural phenomena. Any one who forgets how strong the dramatising instinct was in Turner cannot fail to stumble into many errors of criticism. But the *Warkworth Castle* is noteworthy for something other than the sombre design, and the movement of the storm-clouds gathering behind the castle. The colouring is Girtinesque; the neutral greys of the earlier years have passed away; there is an effort here to get depth in the shadows, richness in the half-tones, and a technical power and freedom equal to those in oil-painting. After this energetic and thoughtful drawing, it is a disappointment to look at the two Scotch studies in pencil on warm buff paper, where the painter's striving after a simple dignity and strength meets with a failure. Whether he was over-awed by the Scotch hills and valleys, or whether he was out of health, I do not know; but for some reason or other this series of drawings must be looked upon as bald and unworthy of Turner. But if he failed in Scotland in 1800–01, he recovered his mastery of the point when, two years later, he made his first Continental tour, and achieved that wonderful set of studies in Savoy and Piedmont which is treasured to-day in the National Gallery. These are studies that move one like solemn music, and would that full justice could be done to them in reduced reproductions. They are of two kinds, and the student will find that those drawn with the point are as fascinating and as instructive as the boldly handled water-colours. The former are described by Ruskin as being sketched with very

black soft pencil on dark paper, then touched with white; but it is more correct to say that the paper is a dirty buff, and that the actual workmanship is a mixture of black chalk and lead pencil. The lead pencil is used to give a grey tone to the black chalk; the high lights are put in with a brush and body-white; the technique, then, is exceptional and worth describing accurately. One characteristic of the sketches and of all Turner's work with the point may be observed in the rarity of diagonal lines running from right to left. Such lines are the most natural in shading; but Turner certainly used them much less frequently than other men. And this is noted here, not merely because it is technically interesting, but because Turner's execution was determined by the immediate effect which he wished to indicate when rapidly building up his composition. I do not think that any of these drawings were done face to face with nature. They were carried out most probably from rapid pencil notes when Turner went back to his inn.

As to the Alpine sketches in water-colour, they must be seen to be appreciated. Descriptions are quite useless. But one may recall the fact that they became the material out of which Turner composed some of his most famous water-colours, like the *Falls of Reichenbach* (1804), *The Devil's Bridge* (1804), *Chamonix, Mer de Glace* (1804), of which noble drawings excellent half-tone blocks are given in this section. Having now reached the summit of Turner's early career as a water-colour painter, we may single out *Chamonix, Mer de Glace*, as the finest achievement of them all. The complexity of design in the ranges of mountains is shadowed forth with a perfect mastery; and the desolate majesty of the whole composition is sweetened and made homely by the tender gentleness of the goats. Turner will pass on presently to other delightful styles, yet his best admirers may turn with an ever-increasing pleasure to the water-colours painted by him during and immediately after his first Continental journey. And the reason of this is not wholly due to the immense impression made upon him by his first acquaintance with the grandeur of the Alps. In the vast solitudes of those mountains he recalled the great manner of his friend Girtin, and he used in his own way the knowledge of breadth which Girtin's art had taught him. Girtin himself was dead, but his spirit came to life again in the Alps, and achieved a new greatness in the work of Turner.

WALTER SHAW SPARROW.

Sepia Drawing, about 1807-1819

FRIGATES AND FISHING BOATS IN THE MEDWAY

In the Collection of Gerald Robinson, Esq.

LIBRARY
OF THE
BOMBAY
BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

MW. 1. Water-Colour, 1787, Turner's Twelfth Year

FOLLY BRIDGE AND BACON'S TOWER, OXFORD

In the National Gallery, London

MW 2. Water-Colour, about 1798; Manner of J. R. Cozens

ALPINE LANDSCAPE

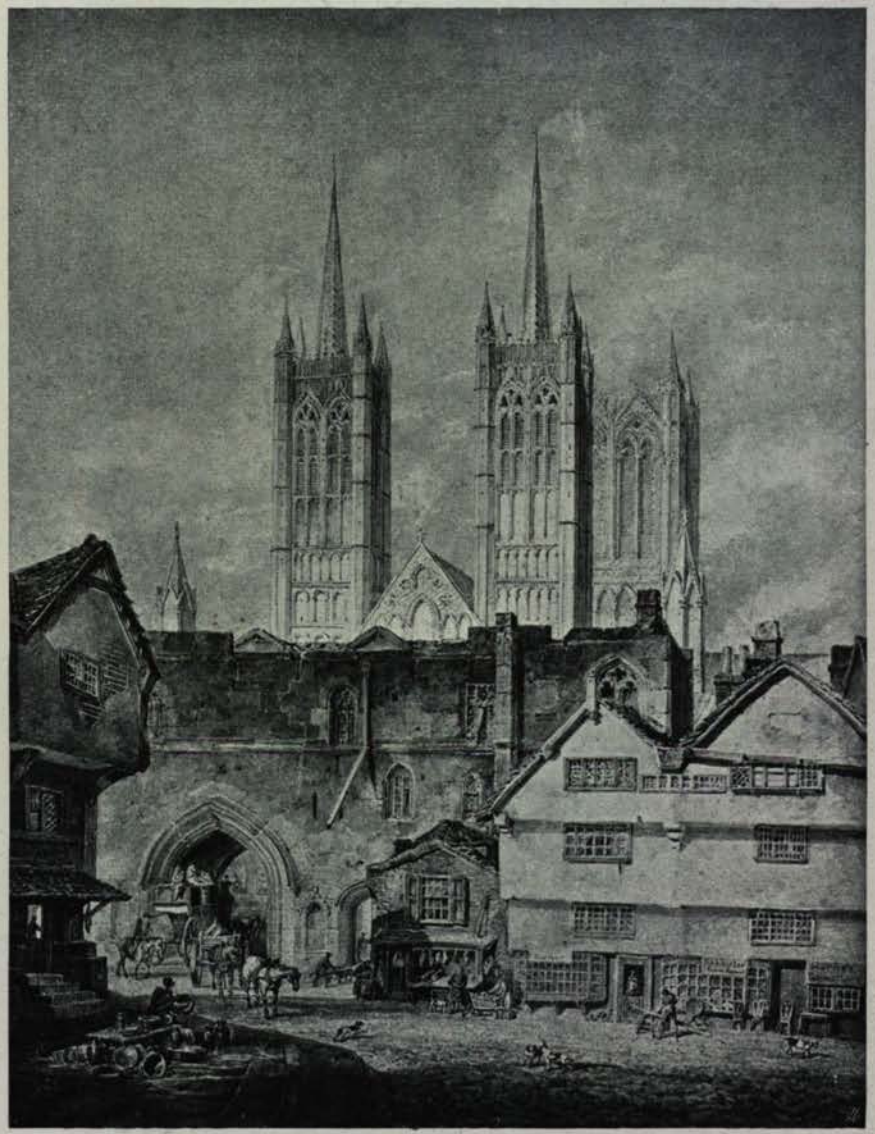
In the Collection of Gerald Robinson, Esq.

MW. 3. Water-Colour, 1793

TINTERN ABBEY

In South Kensington Museum

MW. 4. Water-Colour, 1795



LINCOLN CATHEDRAL

In the Print Room, British Museum

MW. 5. Water-Colour, about 1795-96

THE KITCHEN IN MAIDEN LANE, AND TURNER'S MOTHER (?) In the National Gallery, London

MW 6. Water-Colour, 1795

A WATERFALL In South Kensington Museum

MW 7. Water-Colour, 1799

WARKWORTH CASTLE, NORTHUMBERLAND — In South Kensington Museum

MW 8. Pencil and Body-White on Warm Buff Paper, 1800-1

PASS OF GLENCOE (?) — In the National Gallery, London

MW 9. Lead Pencil and Body-White on Warm Buff Paper, 1800-1

VIEW OF LOCH FYNE (?)

In the National Gallery, London

MW 10. Water-Colour, 1802-3; First Continental Tour

THE SOURCE OF THE ARVEIRON

In the National Gallery, London

MW 11. Brush Drawing, about 1800; in the National Gallery

STUDY OF A SOW

MW 12. Brush Drawing, about 1800; in the National Gallery

STUDY OF A COW

MW 13. Brush Drawing, about 1800-10

STUDY OF A SWAN

In the National Gallery, London

MW 14. Lead Pencil and Black Chalk, with Body-White, on Cold Buff-Grey Paper, 1802-3

ENTRANCE TO THE CHARTREUSE

In the National Gallery, London

MW 15. Water-Colour, 1802-3

PASS OF ST. GOTHARD

In the National Gallery, London

MW 16. Water-Colour, 1802-3

THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE

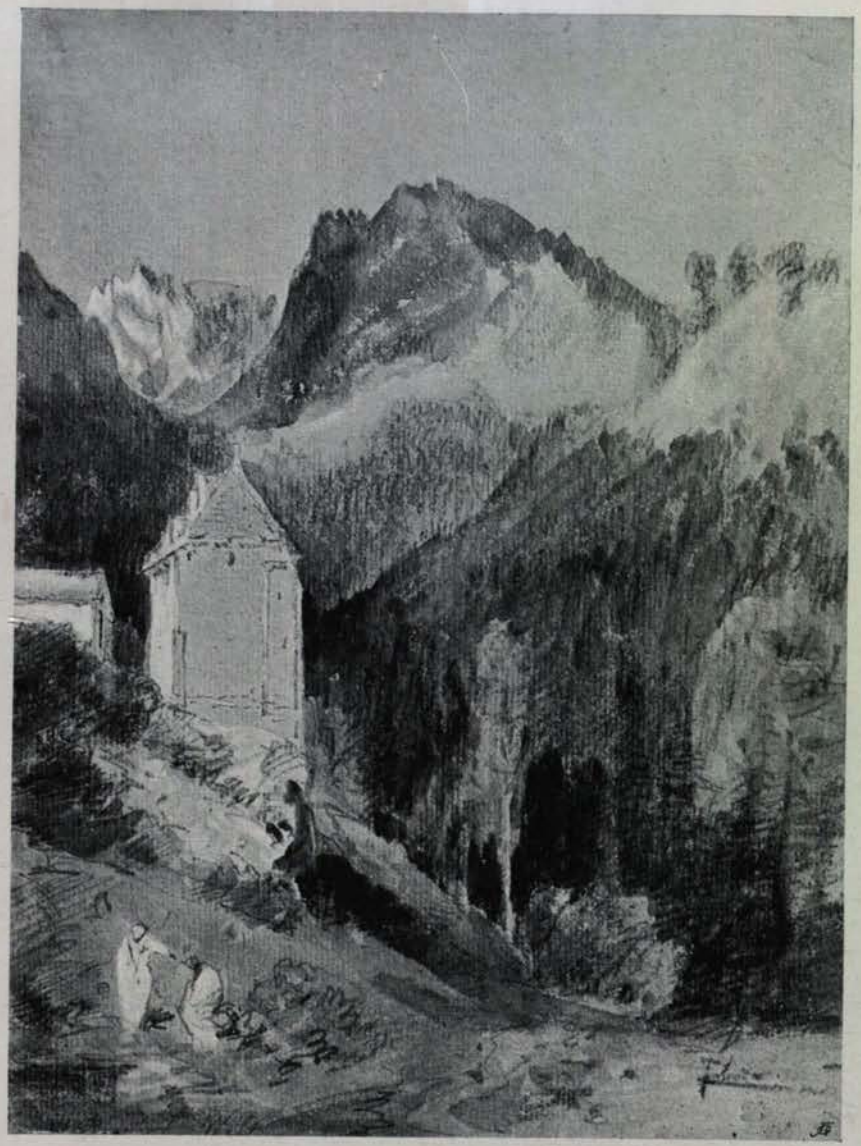
In the National Gallery, London

MW 17. Lead Pencil and Black Chalk, with Body-White, on Cold Buff-Grey Paper, 1802-3

BRIDGES OF THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

In the National Gallery, London

MW 18. Water-Colour Sketch, 1802-3

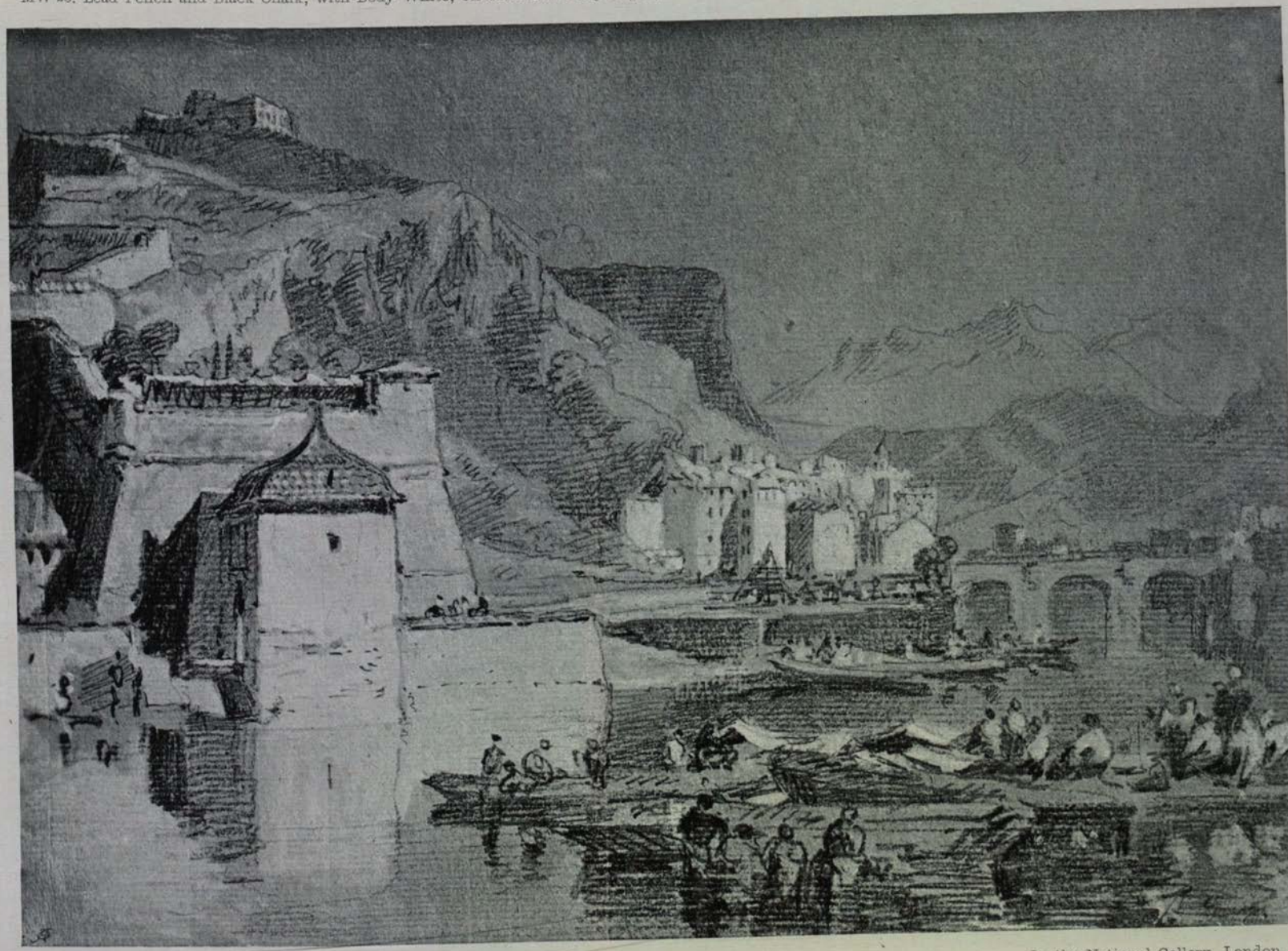


THE LITTLE CHURCH OF ST. HUMBER In the National Gallery, London

MW 19' Water-Colour, 1804

FALLS OF REICHENBACH From the Farnley Hall Collection

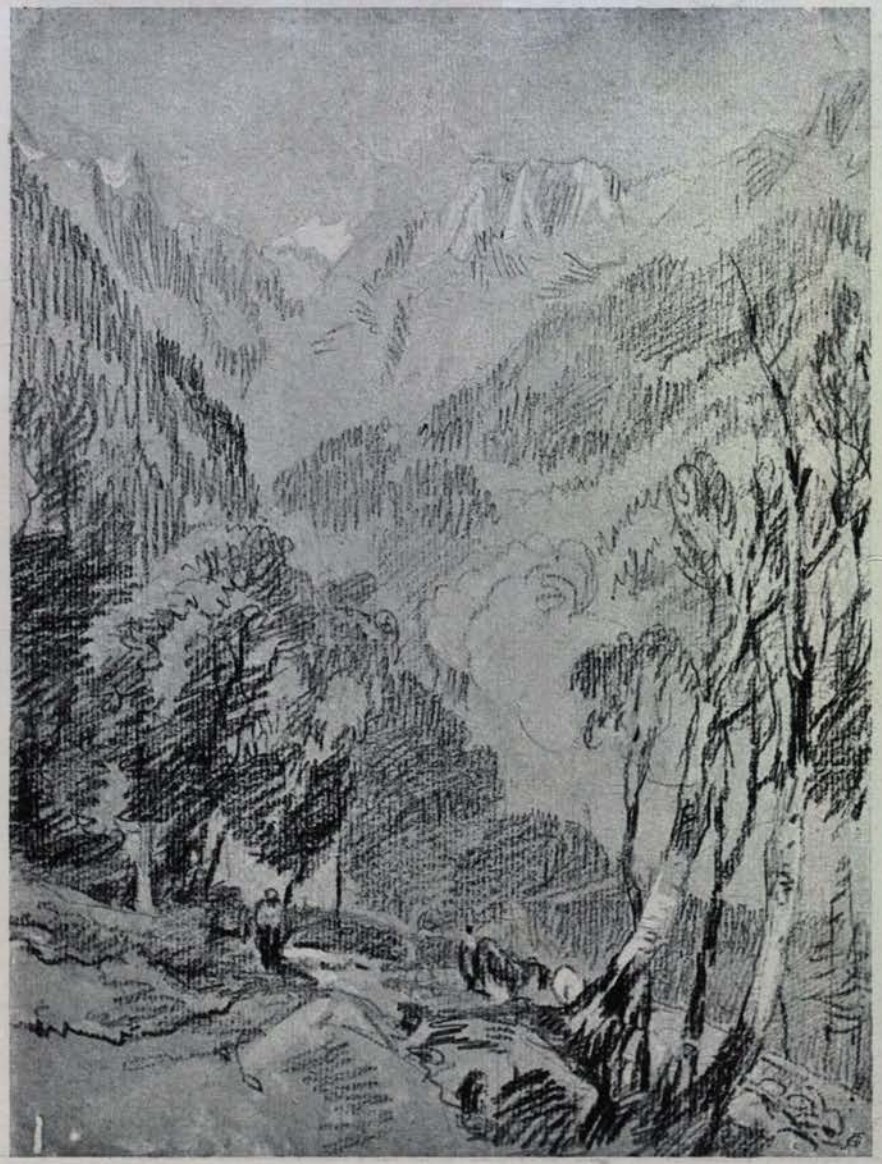
MW 20. Lead Pencil and Black Chalk, with Body-White, on Cold Buff-Grey Paper, 1802-3



THE TOWN OF GRENOBLE

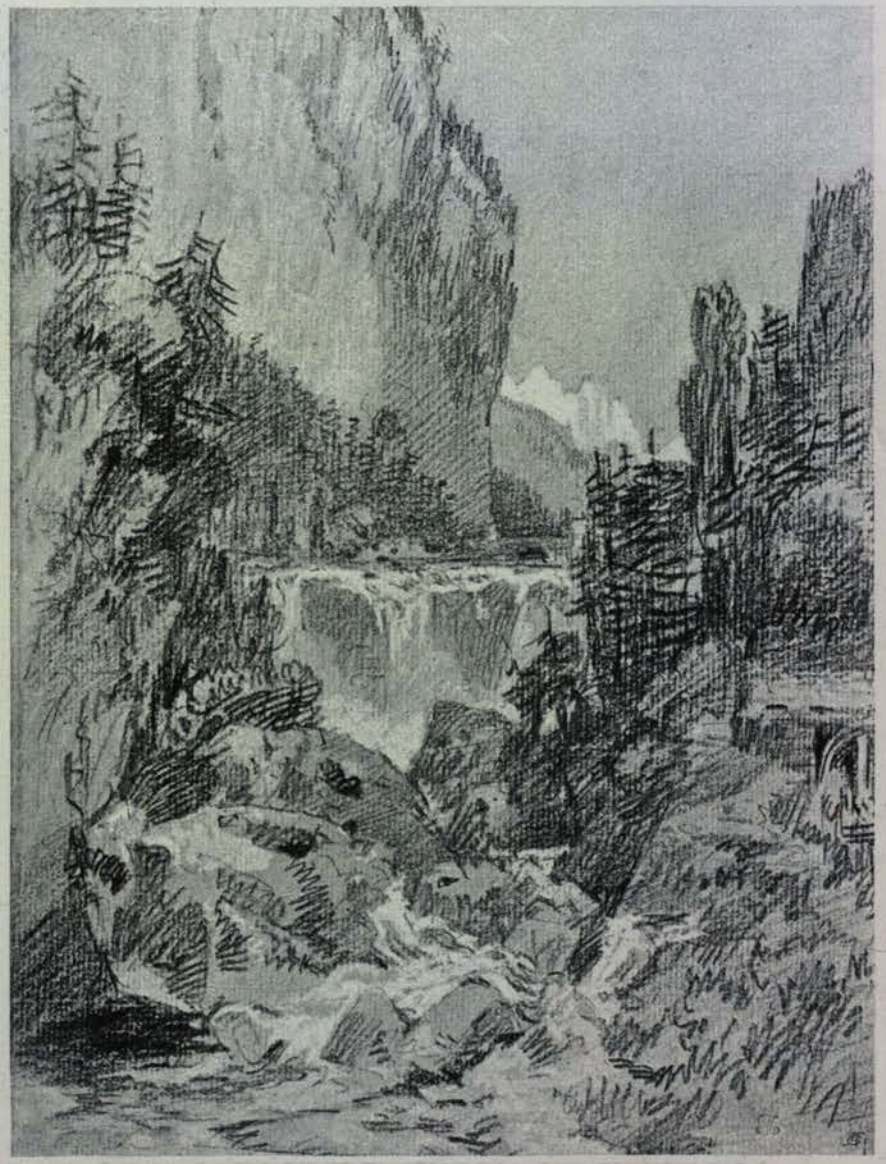
In the National Gallery, London

MW 21. Lead Pencil and Black Chalk, with Body-White, 1802-3



NEAR THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE — In the National Gallery, London

MW 22. Lead Pencil and Black Chalk, with Body-White, 1802-3



CASCADE OF THE CHARTREUSE — In the National Gallery, London

MW 23. Water-Colour, 1804; from the Mackenzie Collection

THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE

From a Photograph lent by Mr. George Allen

MW 24. Water-Colour, 1803-4

CHAMONIX, MER DE GLACE

From the Farnley Hall Collection; the Photograph lent by Mr. George Allen

MW 25. Lead Pencil on Grey-White Paper, 1819 or 1828

ROME: STONE PINES ON MONTE MARIO

In the National Gallery, London

MW 26. Lead Pencil and Black Chalk, with Body-White, Cold Buff-Grey Paper, 1802-3

GRENOBLE, WITH MONT BLANC

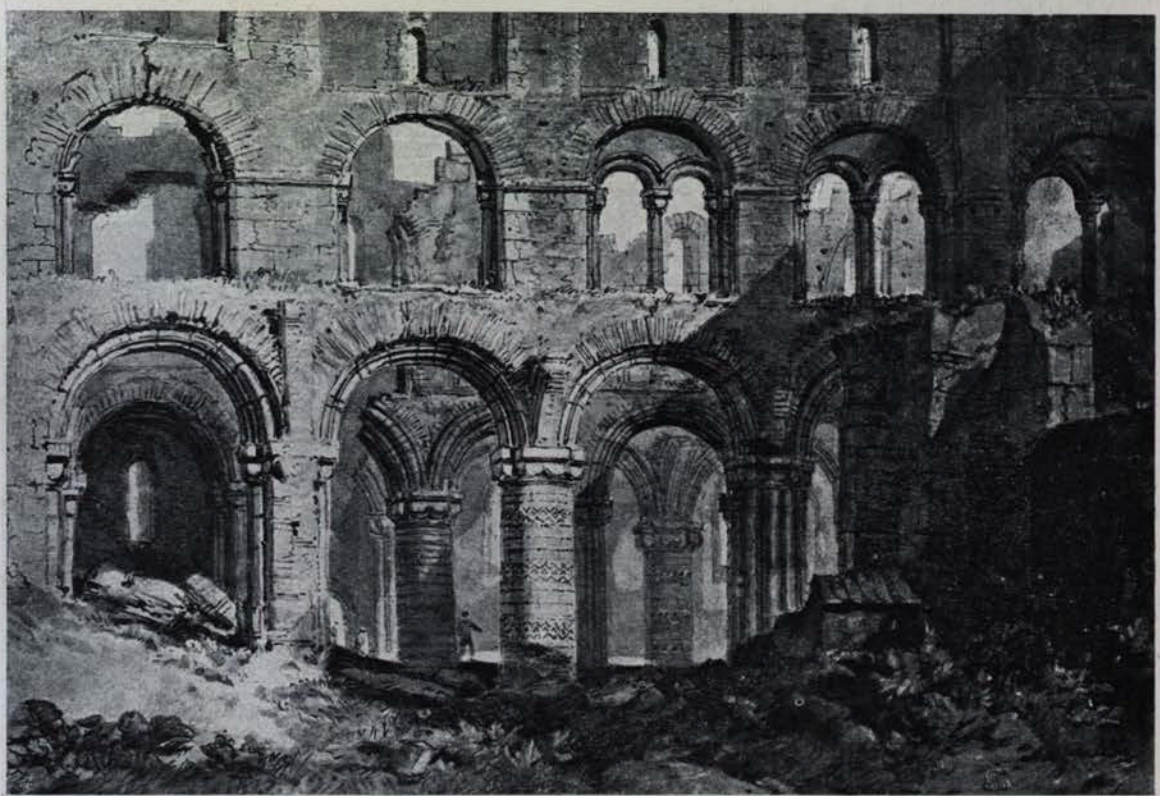
In the National Gallery, London

MW 27. Water-Colour Sketch, 1802-3

ABOVE AMSTEG, ON THE PASS OF ST. GOTHARD

In the National Gallery, London

MW 28. Sepia Design for "Liber Studiorum," 1807-19



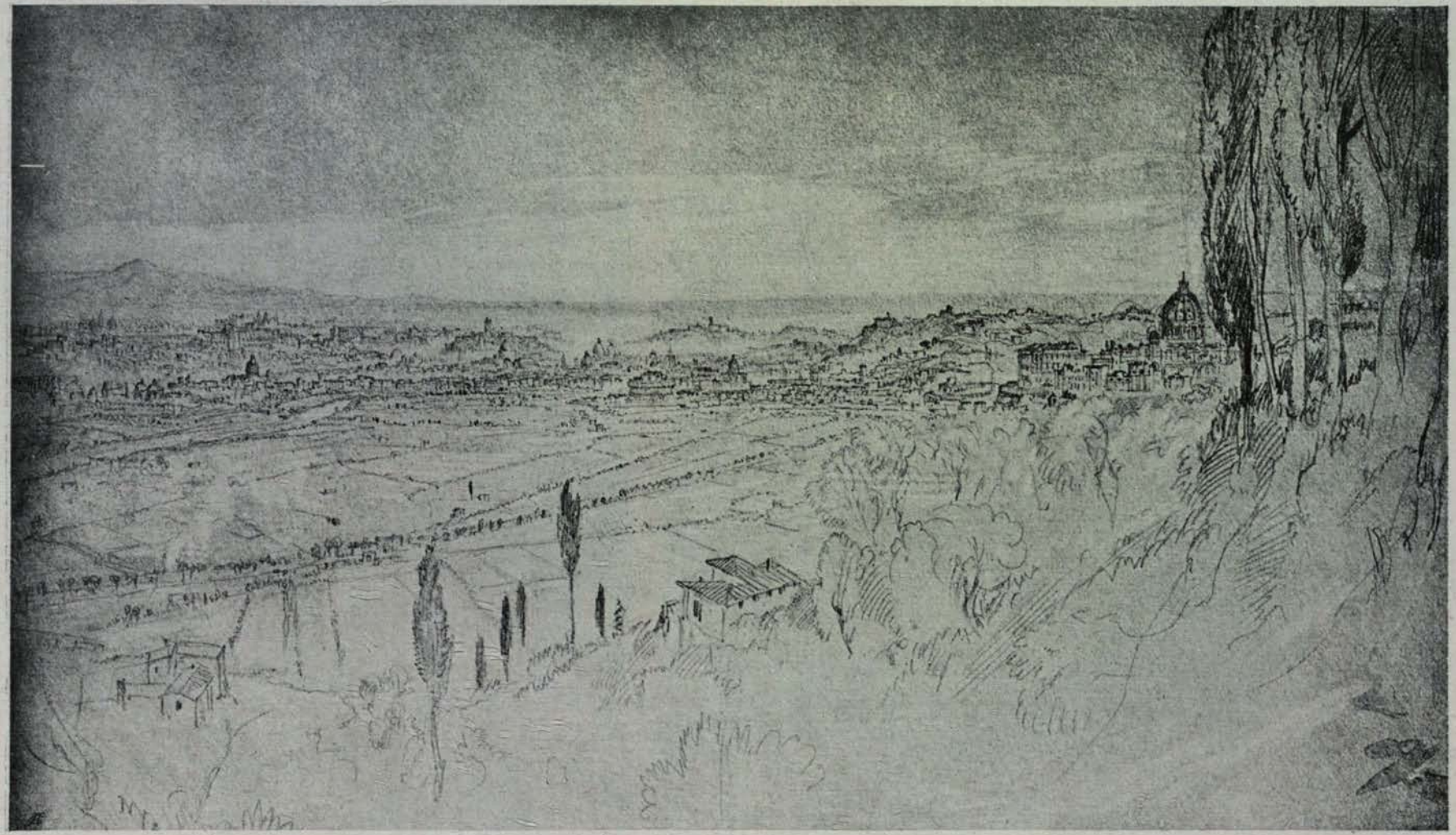
HOLY ISLAND CATHEDRAL

In the National Gallery, London

MW 29. Sepia and Pen Design probably for "Liber Studiorum" (not Engraved), 1807-1819

In the National Gallery, London

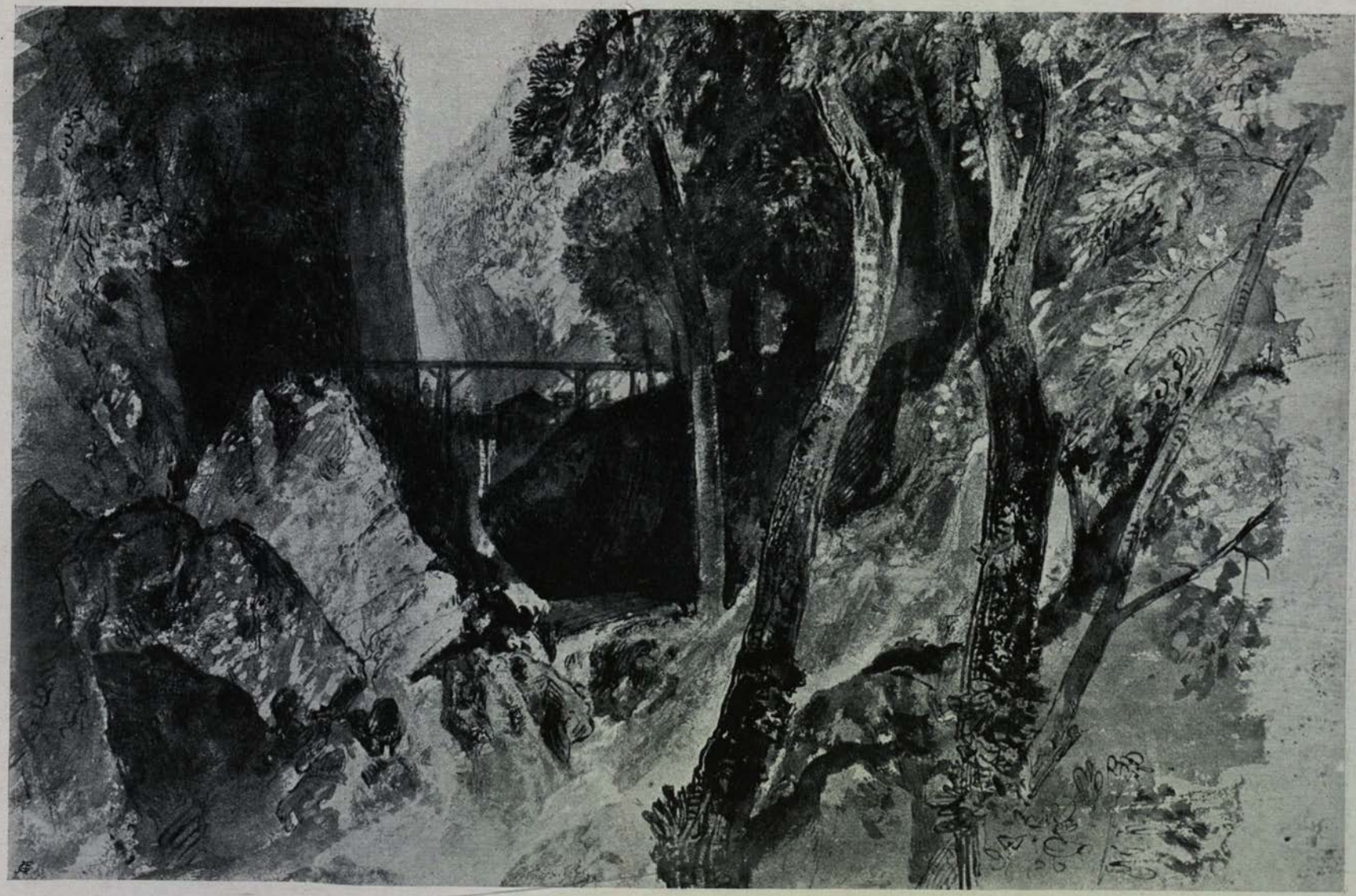
MW 30. Lead Pencil Sketch, 1819-20; on White Paper Washed all over with a Dull Opaque Grey, the Lights picked out with Bread



VIEW OF ROME FROM MONTE MARIO

In the National Gallery, London

MW 31. Sepia and Pen Design for "Liber Studiorum," Engraved by H. Dawe, 1816



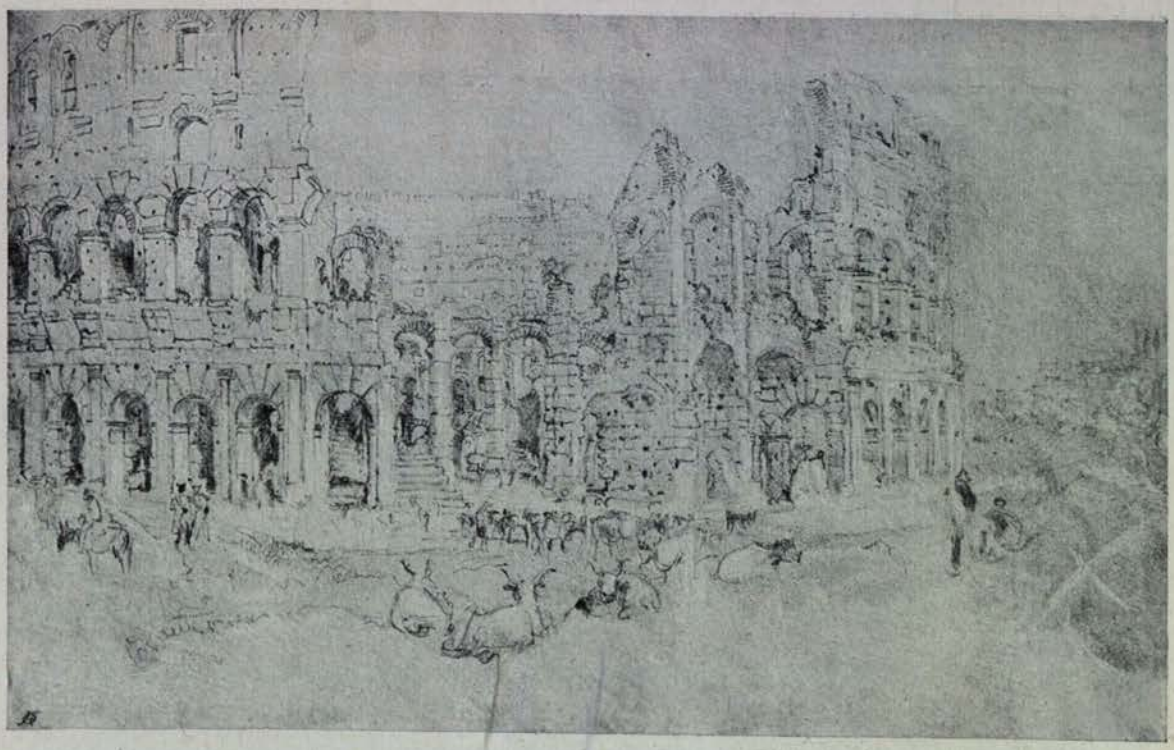
THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

In the National Gallery, London

A PILOT BOAT

In the National Gallery, London

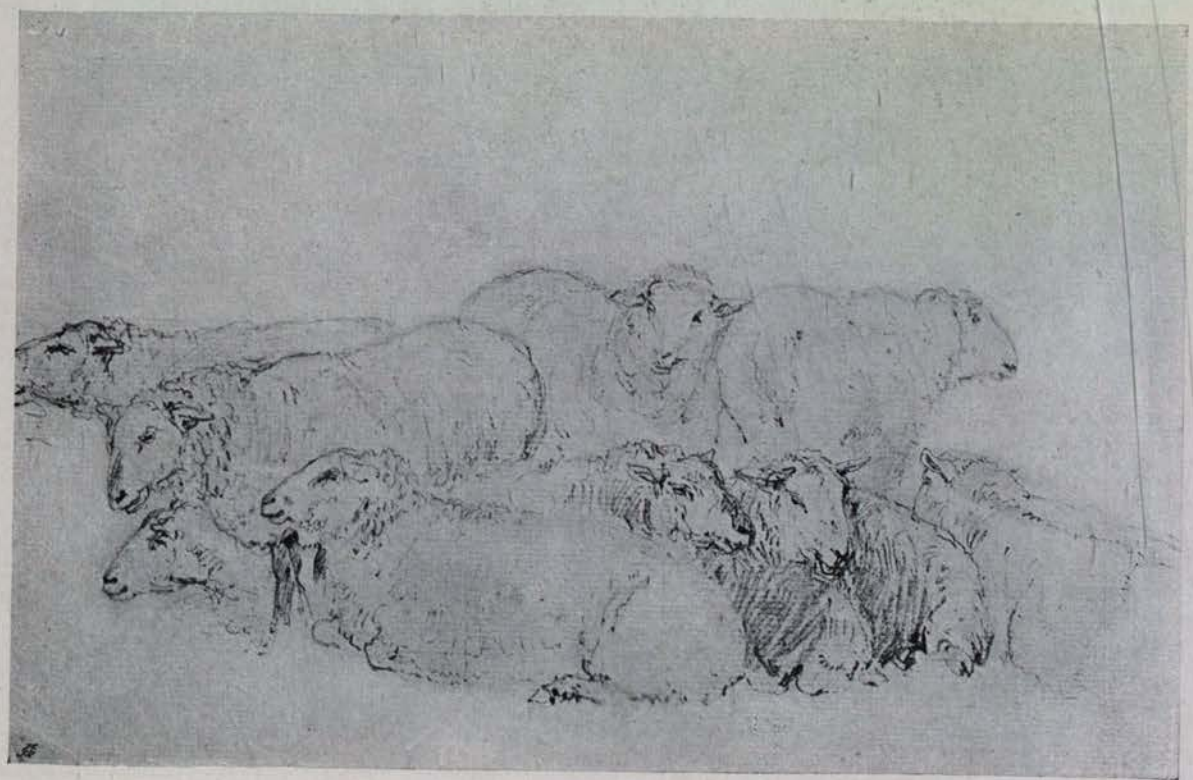
MW 33. Lead Pencil Sketch, 1819-20



THE COLOSSEUM, ROME

In the National Gallery, London

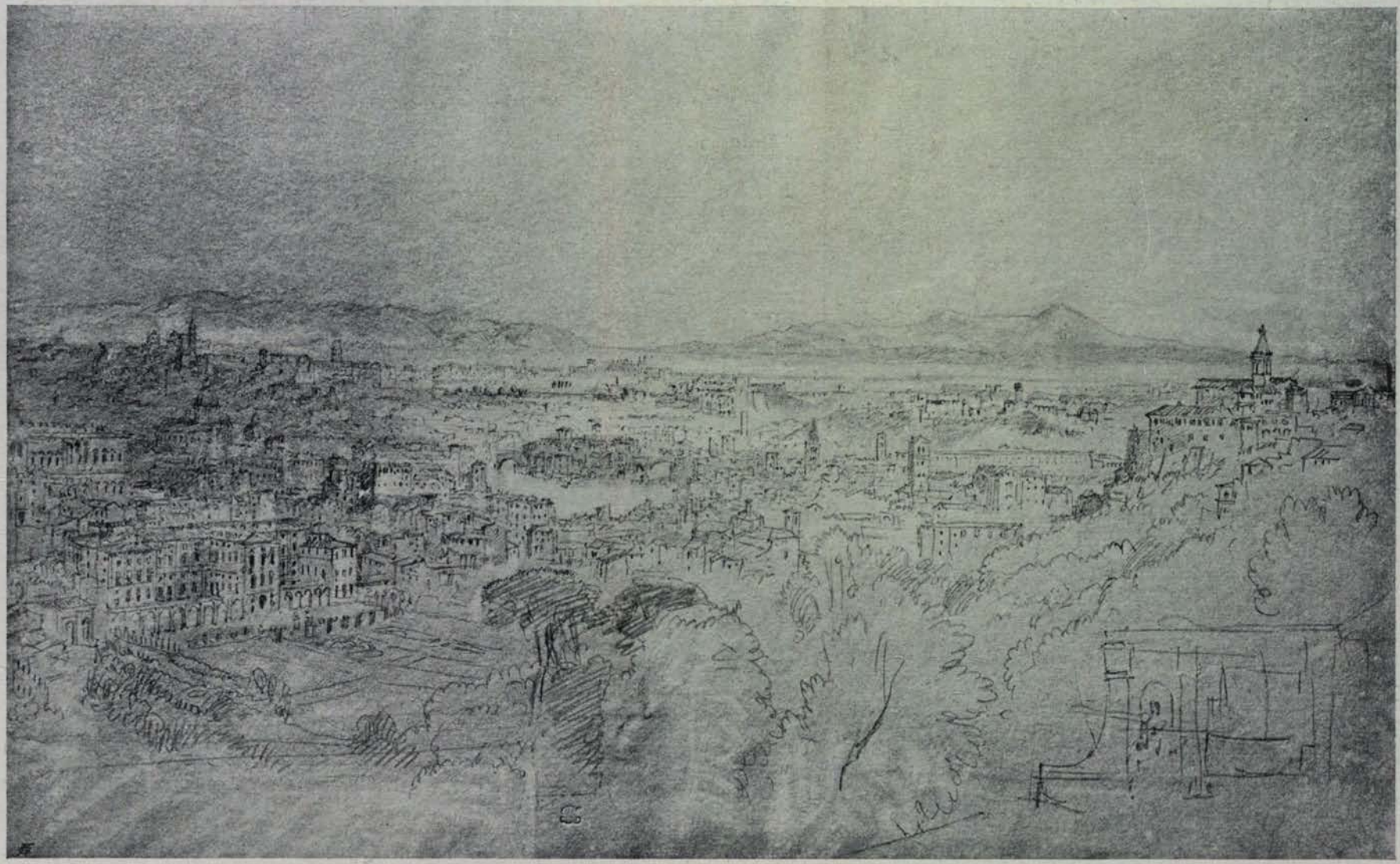
MW 34. Lead Pencil Sketch, 1800-1820



SHEEP

In the National Gallery, London

MW 35. Lead Pencil Sketch, 1819-20; on White Paper Washed all over with a Dull Opaque Grey, the Lights picked out with Bread



GENERAL VIEW OF ROME

In the National Gallery, London

MW 36. Sepia and Pen Design for "Liber Studiorum"; Engraved by C. Turner, 1816

INVERARY CASTLE AND TOWN

In the National Gallery, London

MW 37. Sepia and Pen Design probably for "Liber Studiorum" (not Engraved), 1807-19

SPORTSMEN IN A WOOD

In the Print Room of the British Museum

THE LATER WATER-COLOURS

HEN Girtin and Turner enfranchised the art of English water-colour they set it free from its humble apprenticeship to the business of topographical engraving, and enabled it to find stimulus and independence amid the mysteries of external nature. It then became a not unworthy rival of oil-painting.

The statement of this fact is not intended to convey any disparagement of the work done by Turner and his fellows in the neutral-tinted manner which the engravers found most useful for translation into tones of black and white. It is indeed customary to write of that tinted manner in a strain of apology, though Turner owed to it many qualities both of brush-work and of draughtsmanship. His thorough training in the use of grey tints taught him to handle his brush with ease, and to fix his whole attention upon the actual drawing of the thing before him, undisturbed by those difficulties which would have been forced upon him by an attempt to imitate with fine precision all the combinations of tone and colour presented by a series of objects. The results, in the strong young hands of Turner, were often so restful and so charming that they seemed beyond criticism, like the simple ballads of a song-loving people. Even to-day, after more than a hundred years of Time's ill-usage, the best of them are among the kindest friends that a collector can gather around him. Friends they really are, because they persuade one to be entirely satisfied with what they have to give. It is not till we come to the style based on Girtin's and to the work engendered by the first Continental tour that Turner invades criticism like a conqueror. A time of transition now begins, and thence-forward to the final decadence of his genius the history of the master's water-colour is a glorious thing, in which beauty and blemish are found often side by side. Turner never drifted into a groove of settled excellence, but preferred to attack new dangers in order that he might recreate his art with fresh discoveries.

The period of transition marks his growth from a draughtsman in water-colour into a painter in that medium; and the change in question not only closes the first stages of Turner's progress, but leads the mind onward into the latter-day transformations of his aims. In other words, the emotions called forth by his first acquaint-ance with the Alps did not pass away all at once, but kept on

returning to him during a long course of years whenever a subject wholly congenial to them took firm hold of his mind. There is thus a retrospective character in some of Turner's later pictures; and it seems to belong to the first four years of the nineteenth century rather than to the actual time of its reappearance in the painter's work. All artists are subject, from time to time, to similar revivals of their youth in their æsthetical feelings; and in Turner's case this trait may be studied in some admirable water-paintings, particularly in several of those in the Farnley Hall collection. By way of example, the reader may turn to the plates representing *Lancaster Sands* (W 8), *Sooneck and Bacharach* (W 10), and *Johannisberg* (W 11). These pictures were all brought to completion between the years 1820 and 1824, and are thus twenty years older than the first Alpine studies, with which they harmonise in the import of their emotional significance. One cannot say that the harmony is extended to all the qualities of technique, but their inner essence and life—their psychology, in a word—belongs to the æstheticism of his first trip abroad. It has been asked, sometimes with surprise, why Turner departed at all from the sombre and energetic style that he brought home with him from Savoy and Piedmont. It is a question worth asking, though the answer to it is not far to seek. Turner must have seen, even before he left England, that the style originated by Girtin was soon carried beyond the limits of water-colour and usurped qualities which could be rendered with better success in oil-painting. Girtin himself, in his majestic picture of *Bridgnorth* (1802), had stretched to the full all the resources of his own style, and Turner, too, long before his *Battle of Fort Rock*, painted in 1815, had reached the extreme boundary separating strength in water-colour from the same quality in oil-painting. The *Battle of Fort Rock* may be studied in the basement of the National Gallery. It is a picture of quite astounding vigour, and a student of Turner's technical methods should examine it inch by inch with the utmost care. Every conceivable means is employed to force the medium to do the work of oil-colours. As the eye travels over the picture's surface an observer notes that the paper has been washed, sponged, rubbed with a blunt-pointed instrument, cut sharply with a knife, and treated in several other technical ways that helped Turner to get vigour and variety in the treatment of his textures. The result of it all is a most instructive lesson in the painter's mastery over processes of technique; but the painter himself must have known that in this style he had left nothing new to achieve. It is not wonderful, therefore, that he began to reconsider the special graces of water-

Water-Colour, about 1820-1825

In the Collection of Arthur Samuel, Esq.

A COMPOSITION

colour, and turned his attention from majesty and strength to the more delicate and subtle capabilities of his materials. In the future his art would deal with problems of atmosphere, with the ever-changing pageantry of the sky from dawn to moonlight, and with an abundance of details that required infinite lightness of touch and sensitiveness of feeling. In thinking of all this the mind is staggered by the vast multitudes of sketches and of finished pictures that belong to the later expression of Turnerian poetry in the art of water-colour. How is any one to summarise the merits and defects of this immense achievement? Only a word can be said here on a few points of interest, the foremost among which is Turner's attitude to nature.

This topic alone would furnish material enough for a long essay. Mr. Hamerton, in his book on Turner, deals with it in many of his thoughtful pages; and the late Mr. Monkhouse, in "The Earlier English Water-Colour Painters," gives one ingenuous illustration that brings us very closely in touch with Turner's habit of transforming natural scenes. He takes a drawing of *Newcastle-on-Tyne* by Girtin and contrasts it with Turner's imaginative picture of the same place, that belongs to the "Rivers of England" series. Turner's *Newcastle-on-Tyne* may be examined in Plate W9, and Mr. Monkhouse says that if we compare it with his illustration of Girtin's water-colour, and examine the two bit by bit, "we shall find Girtin's drawing constantly, as it were, cropping up beneath Turner's, the smoke following the same direction and the same curves, the same lights and the same forms recurring in the same places throughout, although not representing always the same things. If these coincidences occurred only in the buildings there would be more room for doubt, but they occur in the boats and the figures." It is thus possible, if not indeed probable, that Turner used his dead comrade's water-colour when at work upon his *Newcastle-on-Tyne*. But how impressive is the transfiguration of every part of the busy composition! Girtin represents the town and river exactly as they were between the years 1790 and 1800, while Turner summons up into pictorial presence a glorified prevision of the Newcastle of to-day. It is a prophecy in art—and the picture still makes real to us, in a manner pregnant with imagination, the greatness wrought out of the smoke and travail of a commercial time.

It is thus from a lofty and imaginative point of view that Turner looked at Nature and made known his love for her; and one may compare his mental attitude to that of a poet for his mistress. As the poet with all his exaggerations respects the womanhood of the mistress and consecrates it in his verse, so Turner, despite his

departure from local traits and topographical facts, portrays for us the heart of Nature—and portrays it in a way more various and more full of observation than any landscape painter we know.

Many writers have analysed the special characteristics of the transfigured changes in a landscape achieved by the genius of Turner; but one thinks it best to sum up the whole matter by giving the most noteworthy feature of all, namely, the manner in which he magnified those elements of a design which held most strongly his personal interest and sympathy. He swelled rivers, uplifted mountains and towns, and gave to his highly intricate compositions a certain refined majesty that recalls the wonder working of a mirage. That this conjuring with Nature differs from the scientific realism of to-day is very obvious, and much may be learnt by contrasting its achievements with the impassioned desire to be literal, that gave us such men as Sisley, Monet, and their fellows. There is room in art for every form of truth that the imagination can discover to us. It is genius that makes the appeal. The æsthetic emotions of mankind are the judge and the jury; and if the appeal stirs those emotions into a life of pleasure, art has won a victory, no matter what may be the artist's attitude in his relation to things seen and felt. Hence the essential point in criticism is that you, as onlooker, should be in sympathy with the distinctive aims expressed by the work before you. Either you must accept Turner, therefore, and the idiosyncrasies of his vision, or else you must pass on from him to some painter more in touch with the bent of your disposition. But, in any case, Turner's interpretation of Nature was all his own, and it reminds one of a little-known but valuable criticism that Goethe made on a double sunlight introduced by Rubens into one of his landscapes. "It is by this," said Goethe, "that Rubens proves himself great, and shows to the world that he, with a free spirit, stands *above* Nature, and treats her conformably to his high purposes. The double light is certainly a violent expedient, contrary to Nature. But if it is contrary to Nature, I still say that it is higher than Nature. I say it is the bold stroke of the master, by which he, in a genial manner, proclaims to the world that art is not entirely subject to natural necessities, but has laws of its own." Goethe goes on to admit that we must indeed respect Nature in structural essentials, else we should annihilate Nature by changing the formation of the bones, or the position of the muscles and the sinews that gives a peculiar character to this or that living creature. "But in the higher regions of artistical production," Goethe continues, "by which a picture really becomes a picture, an

RICHMOND

In the Collection of Arthur Sanderson, Esq.

artist has freer play, and here he may have recourse to fictions, as Rubens had with the double light in his landscape." Goethe's summary of the whole matter is this: "The artist has a twofold relation to Nature; he is at once her master and her slave. He is a slave inasmuch as he must work with earthly things in order to be understood, but he is her master, too, inasmuch as he subjects these earthly needs to his higher intentions and renders them subservient. He would speak to this world through an entirety; but this entirety he does not find in Nature: it is the fruit of his own mind, or, if you like it, of the aspiration of a fructifying divine breath."

A better example of Goethe's whole meaning could not be found than in the works of Turner. No painter more than he was ever more truly a master and a slave to external facts. In his treatment of details he was untiring in his patient and reverent fidelity; and again and again he ruined the unity of a design in order that he might dwell (too fondly) on the separated interests of minor parts. Remark, too, in this connection, the wondrous diversity of Turner's sympathy for all kinds of landscapes, and do not lose sight of that constant habit of mind which caused him to sweeten and complete his work with human joys, sorrows, sports, little comedies, and brisk occupations. With the one exception of sombre and majestic forest scenery, he found his own in every conceivable kind of landscape that European travel could suggest; and it is rare that we come upon a single picture of any importance in which there is not a companionable human interest. It is here that we meet with the epical note of his genius—a note which is often expressed in a dramatic manner, sometimes in a way that is even comical, sometimes touched with burlesque. In an age when most painters were either living in their isles of dreams, or else playing the courtier in search of portrait commissions, it was then that Turner felt the drama of his country's life, and responded to all its vicissitudes. Little that was national failed to touch his heart. Naval victories, the death of Nelson, the burning of the Houses of Parliament, the pleasure of woodcock shooting, the struggle of the fisherfolk along the sea-coast, the merry-making of the Jack Tars near Portsmouth, all and each stirred his genius and issued into art. There is not room here to give many examples of the dramatic and imaginative joy that Turner experienced when he portrayed man in conflict with the elements or in happiness out of doors. Turn to illustration W 1—a powerful water-colour of *Pembroke Castle*. A great thunderstorm is clearing away, a moist desolation hangs about everything; there is wreckage on the shore, and danger to the boats in the near distance. Most painters would be quite satisfied with

that alone ; but Turner knew that the fishermen's toilsome life goes on, come wet come woe ; the fact moved him, and he made it essential to the balance of his light and shade and design.

In the illustration of *Lancaster Sands* (W 8), there is another fine manifestation of the honest and bluff sailor delight that Turner felt always for the sea-winds and cloud-tossed skies. While painting he actually rode in imagination by the side of that lumbering coach, and was braced by the exercise. To convey an impression of this kind is really a form of great acting, and it places Turner in the first rank of art's histrionics. It must be owned here, however, that Turner from time to time allowed his passion for the sea to put his work out of keeping with the character belonging to his subject. This occurs repeatedly in the "Ports of England" series. The word port implies safety, security, rest, peace ; and a picture of a port should, by all æsthetic rights, be free from any suggestion of tumbling waves and sea-sickness. But Turner cared only for the commercial value of a name, and, in most of his English ports, he plays the sailor with a gallant and cheery disregard of the inappropriateness of his title. For all that, when considered as pictures, these water-colours are exhilarating and characteristic, and the *Sheerness*, like the *Humber*, is among the best of his seafaring work. The *Portsmouth* (W 18) has much charm, though the foreshortening of the battleship is defective ; it leaves the shape of the vessel so tub-like that it is difficult to believe that any pressure of the wind in the sails above could drive the rounded mass of wood into action. The *Whitby* (W 16) is rhythmic and beautiful, while the *Scarborough* (W 13) is truly port-like, peaceful, and radiantly serene. It is a drawing all of gold, of amber, and of translucent blues. Everything is sunny and charged with seaside laziness. The indolent dripple of the waves, the ships repeating their hulls in untroubled reflections, the terrier on guard near the luncheon-baskets—everything contributes to the delight of ease that this picture calls into being.

We may pass on now to a trait in Turner's water-colours that appeals to us all at a first glance : I mean the unfailing elegance of form and line in every part of a composition. This particular grace is not confined to such details as the curvature of branches, the massed complexity of leaves, the sweeping outline of a boat, and the gentle undulations of a valley girt by hills ; it is found in the most majestic of the Alpine pictures, as well as in the most tempestuous of his sea pieces. It was a quality that stood him in excellent stead in the interpretation of every sort of cloud effect ; and his delicacy of taste was so unerring that he rendered clouds more beautifully than words

Water-Colour, National Gallery, London. Engraved by W. Say, June 1, 1825

BROUGHAM CASTLE, LOWTHER

"Rivers of England" Series

can express. In this connection, as a further example of Turner's elegance, the student should note the infinite tenderness he displayed when painting the grey half-tones under the belly of a cumulus cloud. Turner's greys, indeed, are as varied as they are exquisite ; but they have rivals in the greys of Müller, Cox, and Hunt.

The colour plate of *Arundel Castle* represents another delightful phase of the same quality. How graceful is the treatment of the shelving woods, of the vanishing distance ! The deer, too, with their shy alertness, are admirable. Turner never drew with zest and success any animal or any bird that did not appeal strongly to his delight in elegance. As a consequence he preferred deer to dogs, and active mountain goats to the sleek fat cattle of the pasture lands. The plumage of every bird fascinated his sense of colour ; but those which he painted were all gentle and full of grace, like the teal in Illustration W 7. On the same page, in Plate W 6, there is an unsurpassable rapid study of fish, at once tenderer and more spontaneous than any still-life study in water-colour by William Hunt. Last of all, we come to the vignettes as examples of Turner's grace, delicacy, and lightness. It has sometimes been asked why a man of such transcendent gifts should have spent so much time in designing vignetted water-colours. Shakespeare, it is argued, did not waste an hour on trivialities. Why, then, did Turner, the Shakespeare of English art, illustrate the poems by Rogers with vignettes ? The answer is simple. The vignette not only helped him to earn money : it had special difficulties of its own, and Turner delighted to show that he, in a square inch or two, could represent hundreds of miles of distance, and produce many other effects that his publishers wanted.

Now, it was Turner's ambition to work rapidly in order that he might produce much ; and he rarely spent many days on even the most elaborated water-colour. He had gathered such vast quantities of knowledge by his constant practice of sketching with a pencil that he was never at a loss in his studio for anything essential to the work in hand. Leitch, the water-colour painter, told a friend of mine that he once accompanied Pickersgill to Turner's studio, where he had the privilege of watching the great man at his labours. There were four drawing-boards, each of which had a handle screwed to the back. Turner, after sketching in his subject in a fluent manner, grasped the handle and plunged the whole drawing into a pail of water by his side. Then, quickly, he washed in the principal hues that he required, flowing tint into tint, until this stage of the work was complete. Leaving this first drawing to dry,

he took the second board and repeated the operation. By the time the fourth drawing was laid in, the first would be ready for the finishing touches; and Leitch was greatly impressed by the common sense of the whole proceeding.

As a rule, Turner did not mix his methods of work, but painted entirely in transparent washes, or entirely in body-colour. His object in transparent tints being purity and brilliance, he was careful that the white paper should be seen through the myriad particles of broken colour floated over it in washes. This done, he finished his work with a netting of exquisite lines that knit the drawing together, and left the under-painting to sparkle through the meshes of the net. It was thus, in his later water-pictures, that Turner produced "infinity," and represented Nature's daylight.

In his use of body-pigment Turner was, and is, inimitable, obtaining pastel-like qualities which have the greatest charm, without seeming in the least at variance with the medium of body-colour. Almost always the paper is grey, as in the "Rivers of France" series, and also, let me add, in a good many little-known Venetian sketches in the basement of the National Gallery. In these the white paint is frequently put on very thickly in a raised impasto, while in the set of French drawings the body-colour is used more sparingly, and the grey paper is employed as an actual colour-factor with the greatest skill and effect. The illustrations do justice to the drawings made by Turner for his *Wanderings by the Seine*, and it would be pleasant to say much about them if it were at all possible to express in words their differing beauties and defects. The figure interest is here and there too obtrusive, as in the *Hôtel de Ville and Pont d'Arcole* (W 31), and in some of the bridges the drawing is lumpy and heavy, the rarest defect in Turner; but one feels throughout that Turner loved France and was happy in his sketching there. And here we must leave him busily at work on French soil, in a land which, in the words of Sir Philip Sydney, was never any thing worse to us than our "sweet enemy"—surely a more lovable neighbour than a candid and bitter friend.

WALTER SHAW SPARROW.

Water-Colour, National Gallery, London. Engraved by G. H. Phillips, Sep. 1, 1826

MOUTH OF THE HUMBER

"Rivers of England" Series

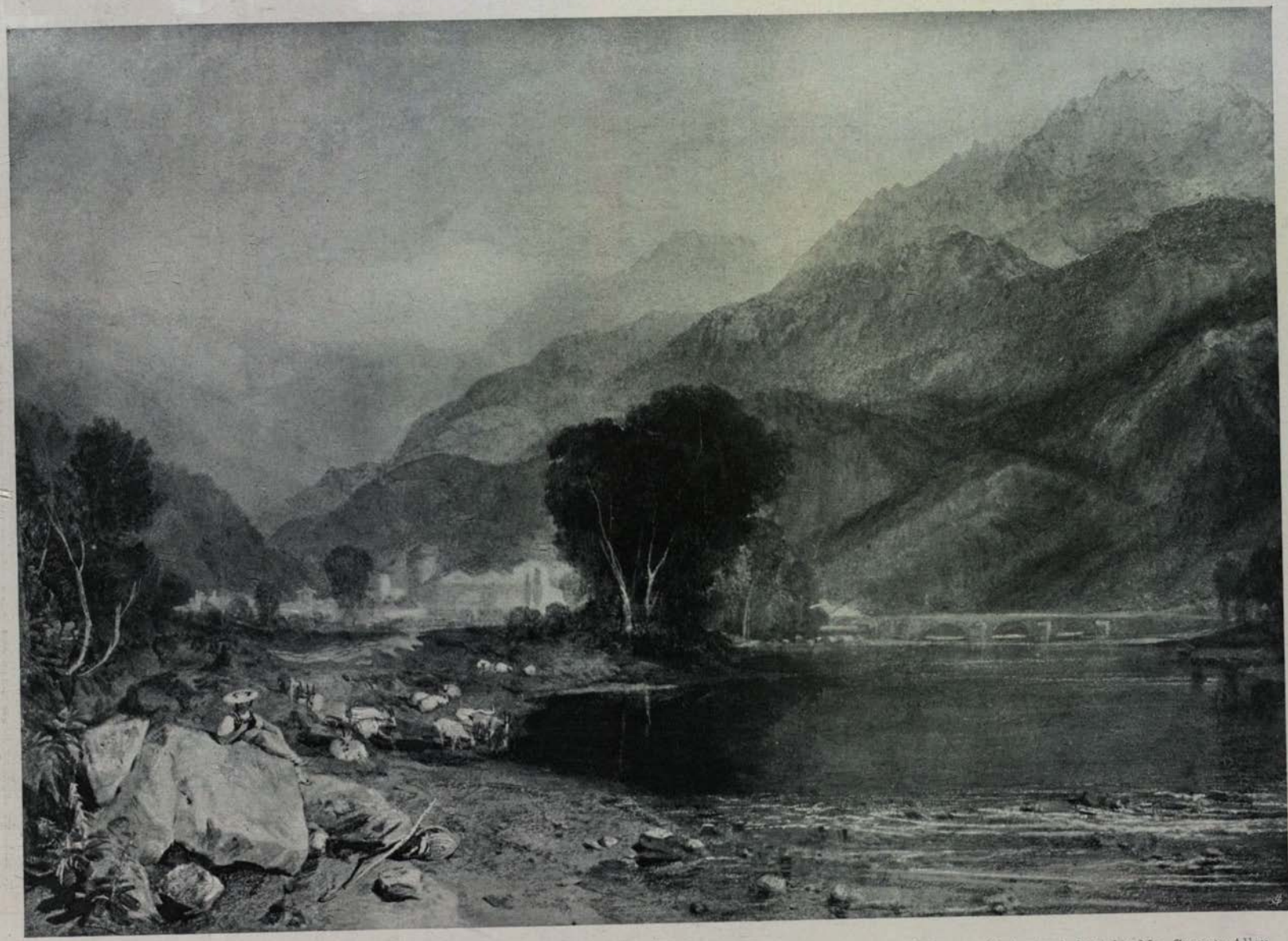
LIBRARY
OF THE
BOMBAY
BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

W. Water-Colour, 1806; in the Collection of Mrs. W. Pitt Miller

PEMBROKE CASTLE—A THUNDERSTORM CLEARING UP

Reproduced from a Photograph lent by Mr. George Allen

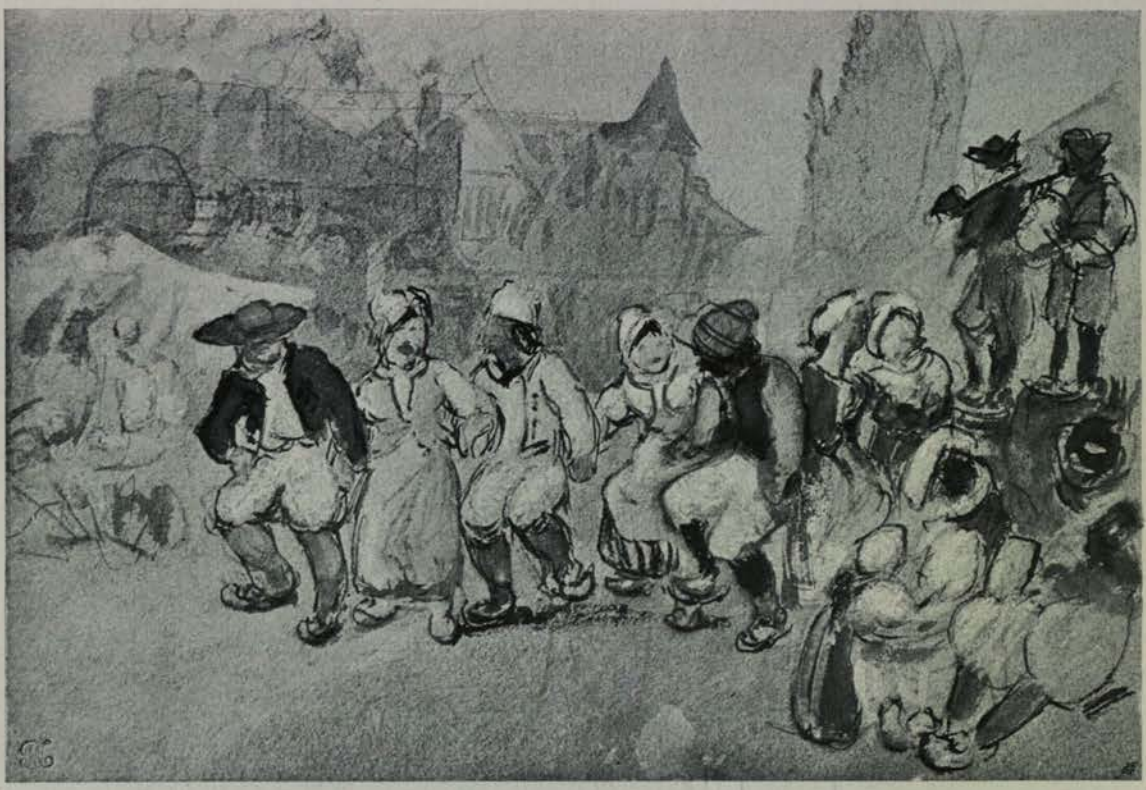
W 2. Water-Colour, 1809; in the Farnley Hall Collection



BONNEVILLE, SAVOY

Reproduced from a Photograph lent by Mr. George Allen

W 3. Water-Colour Sketch, between 1820-35



FRENCH DANCE IN SABOTS — In the National Gallery, London

W 4. Water-Colour with White of Egg, or a Solution of Gum, about 1800-10

A PARK SCENE — In the National Gallery, London

W 5. Water-Colour, dated 1810; in the Farnley Hall Collection

VALLEY OF CHAMONIX

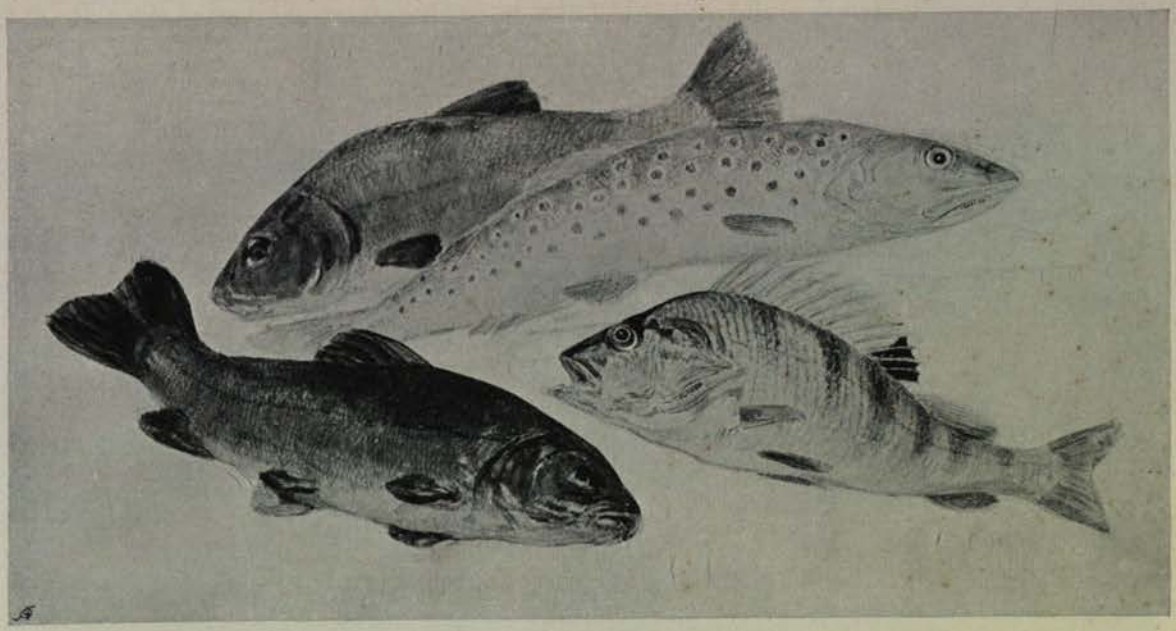
Reproduced from a Photograph lent by Mr. George Allen

Water-Colour, National Gallery, London. Engraved by T. Lupton, March 1, 1827

"Rivers of England" Series

STANGATE CREEK, ON THE MEDWAY

W 6. Water-Colour, about 1813



STUDIES OF FISH

In the National Gallery, London

W 7. Water-Colour between 1810-20

STUDY OF A TEAL FLYING

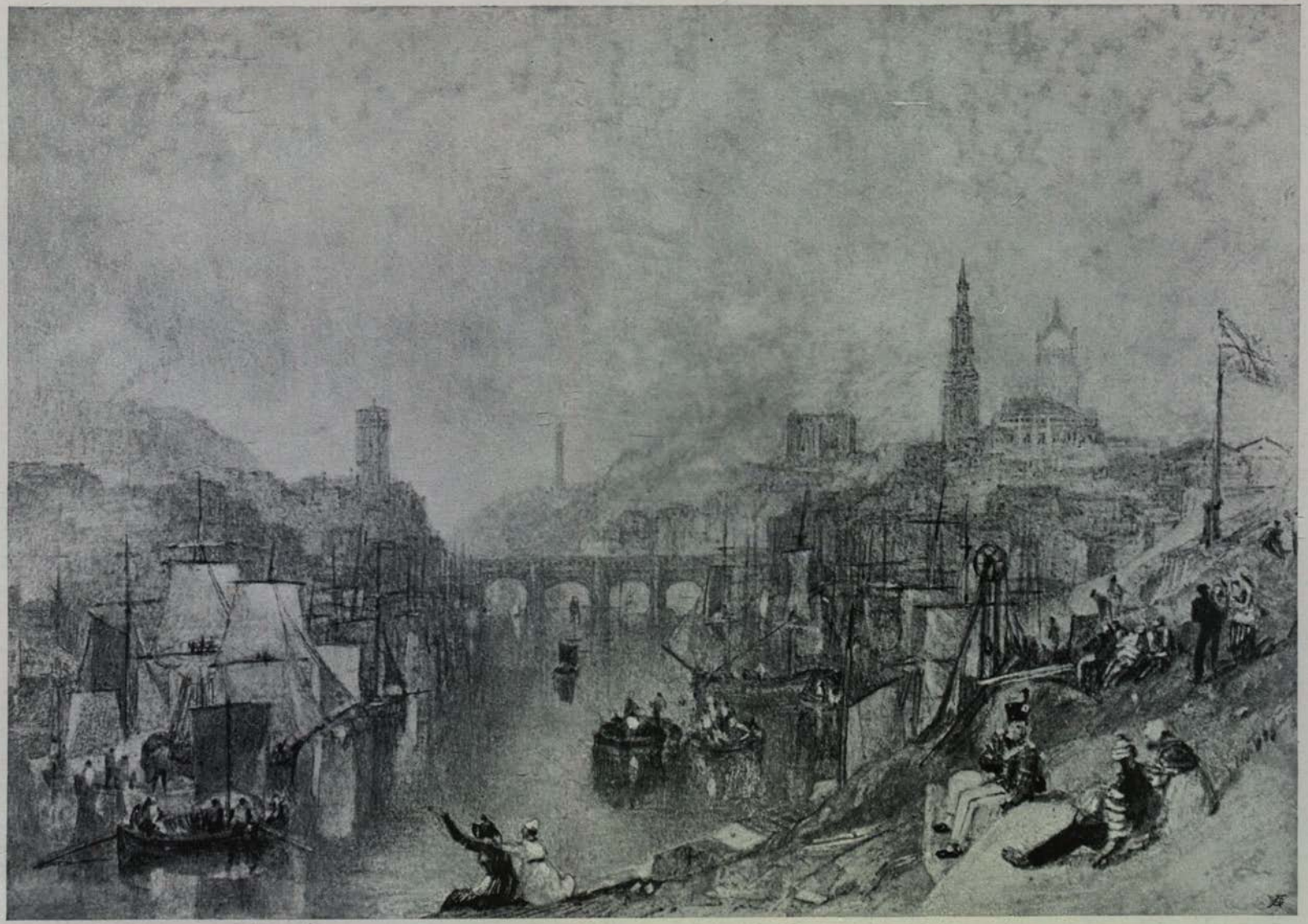
In the National Gallery, London

W 8. Water-Colour, 1820; in the Farnley Hall Collection

LANCASTER SANDS

Reproduced from a Photograph lent by Mr. George Allen

W 9. Water-Colour, Engraved by T. Lupton, 1823, for the "Rivers of England" Series



NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE

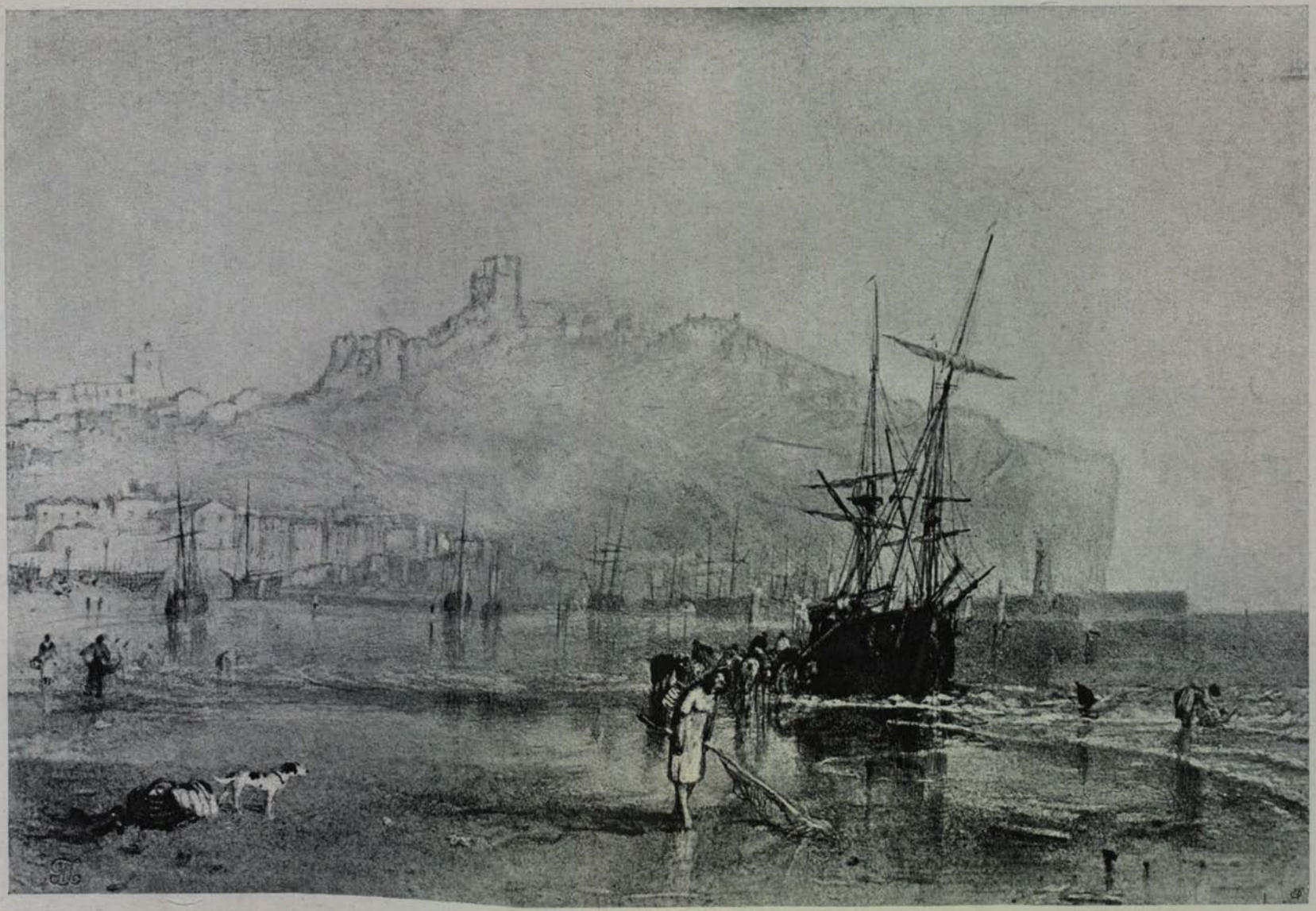
In the National Gallery, London

W 10. Water-Colour, 1824; in the Farnley Hall Collection

SOONECK AND BACHARACH

Reproduced from a Photograph lent by Mr. George Allen

W 13. Water-Colour, Engraved by T. Lupton, 1826, for "The Ports of England" Series



SCARBOROUGH

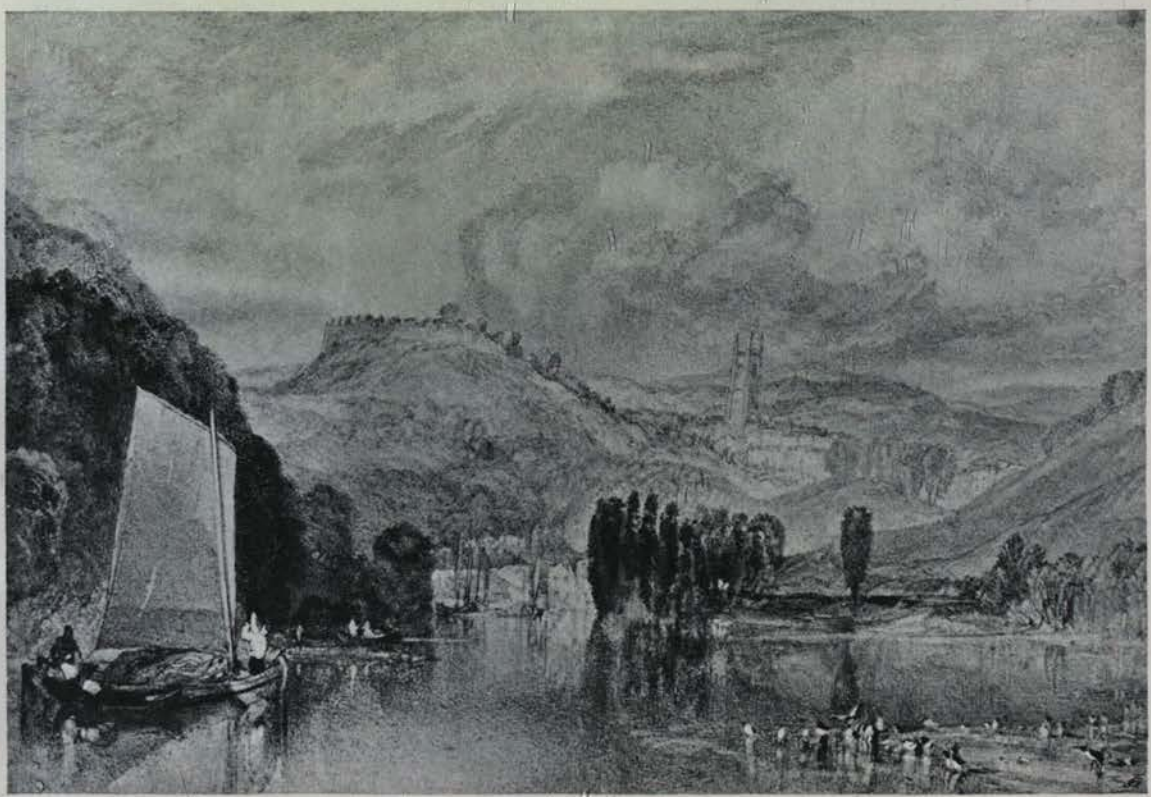
In the National Gallery, London

W 14. Water-Colour, Engraved by C. Turner, 1824, for the "Rivers of England" Series

MORE PARK, ON THE RIVER COLNE

In the National Gallery, London

W 15. Water-Colour, Engraved by C. Turner, 1835, for the "Rivers of England" Series



TOTNESS, ON THE RIVER DART

In the National Gallery, London

Water-Colour, about 1833

CHÂTEAU D'ARC

In the Collection of Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, Bart, M.P.

W 16. Water-Colour, Engraved by T. Lupton, 1826, for the "Ports of England" Series

WHITBY

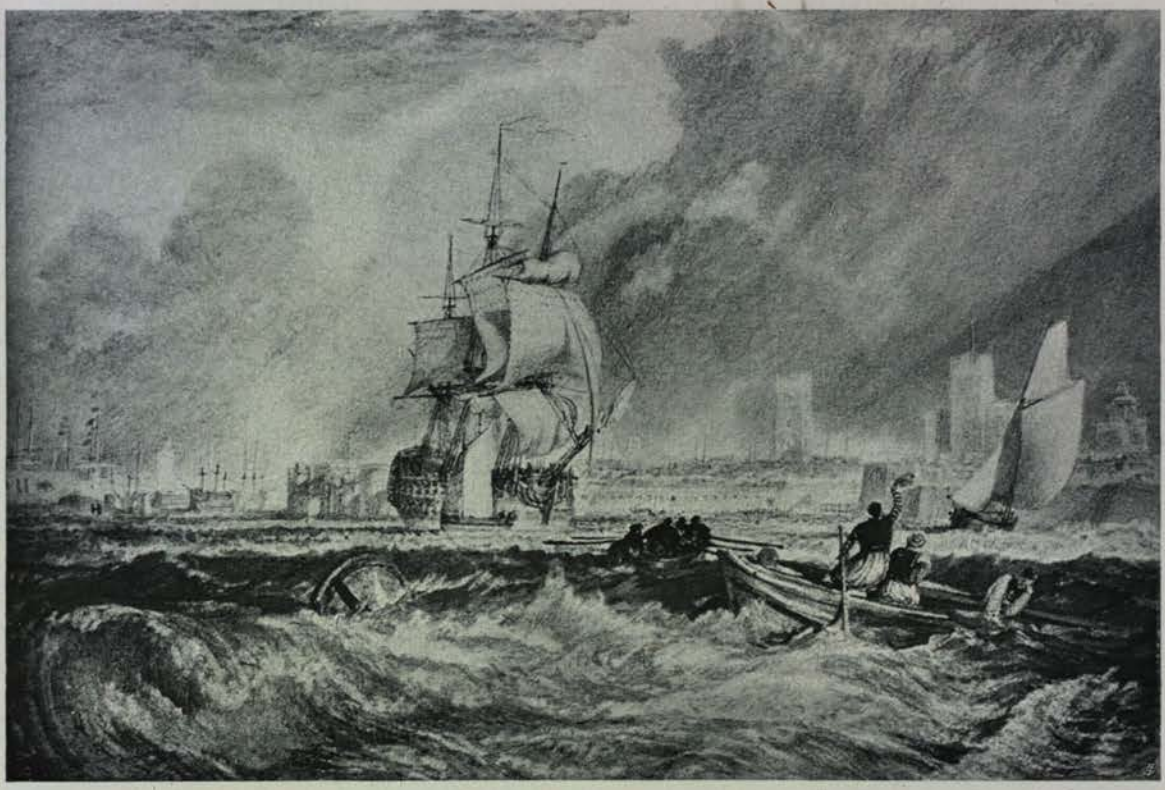
In the National Gallery, London

W 17. Water-Colour, Engraved by C. Turner, 1825, for the "Rivers of England" Series

OKEHAMPTON CASTLE, ON THE RIVER OKEMENT

In the National Gallery, London

W 18. Water-Colour, Engraved by T. Lupton, 1828, for the "Ports of England" Series



PORTSMOUTH

In the National Gallery, London

W 19. Water-Colour, Engraved by T. Lupton, 1828, for the "Ports of England" Series

SHEERNESS

In the National Gallery, London

W 20. Water-Colour Sketch, Middle Period

TIVOLI: THE TOWN WITH ITS CASCADES — In the National Gallery, London

W 21. Water-Colour, Engraved by R. Wallis 1827, for Rogers' "Italy" (1830)

ST. MAURICE — In the National Gallery, London

W 22. Water-Colour 1825-1830; in the Collection of John Edward Taylor, Esq.

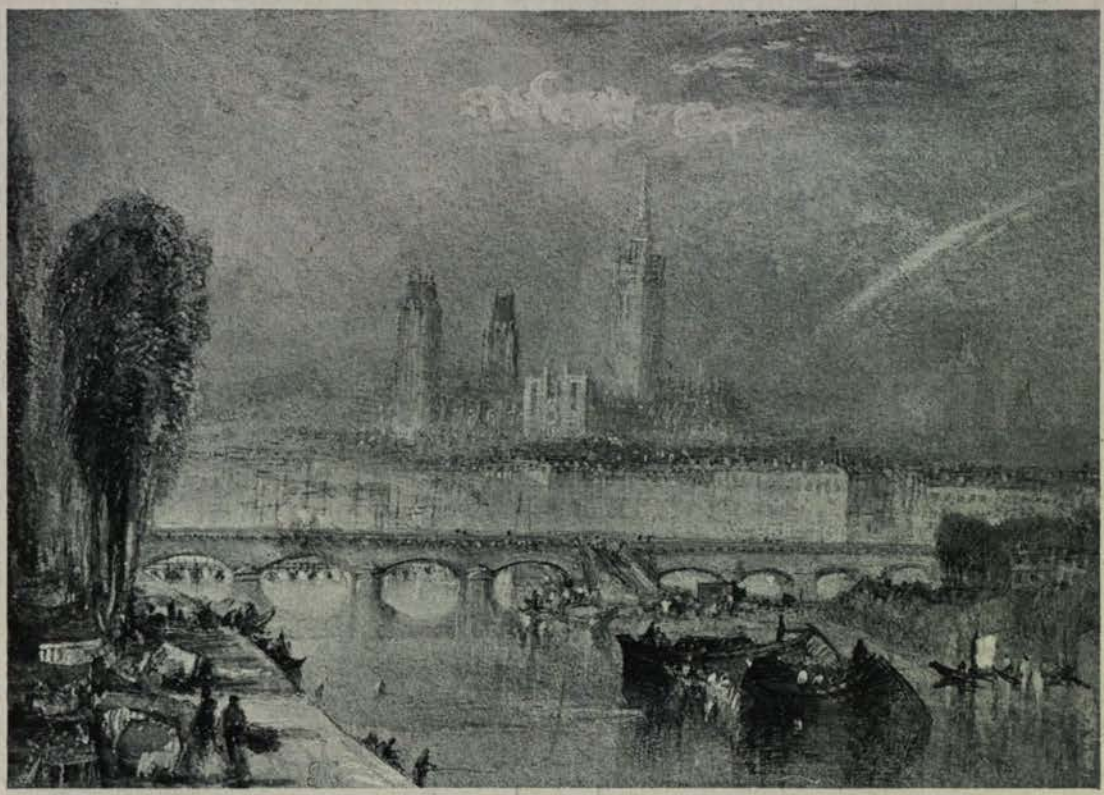
KESWICK LAKE, CUMBERLAND

Reproduced from a Photograph lent by Mr. George Allen

COLOGNE: A VIGNETTE

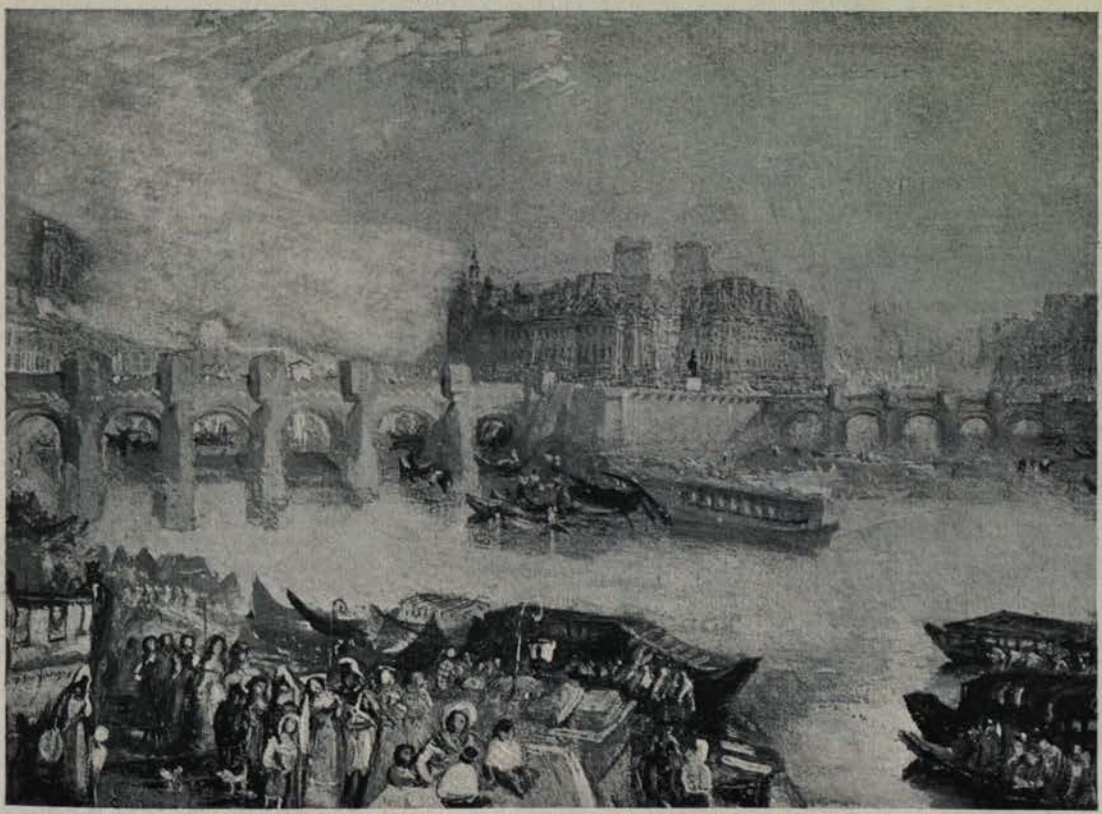
In the Collection of Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, Bart, M.P.

W 23. Body-Colour on Grey Paper; Engraved by W. Miller for "Wanderings by the Seine," First Series, 1834



ROUEN, LOOKING DOWN RIVER — In the National Gallery, London

W 24. Body-Colour on Grey-Paper; Engraved by W. Miller for "Wanderings by the Seine," Second Series, 1835

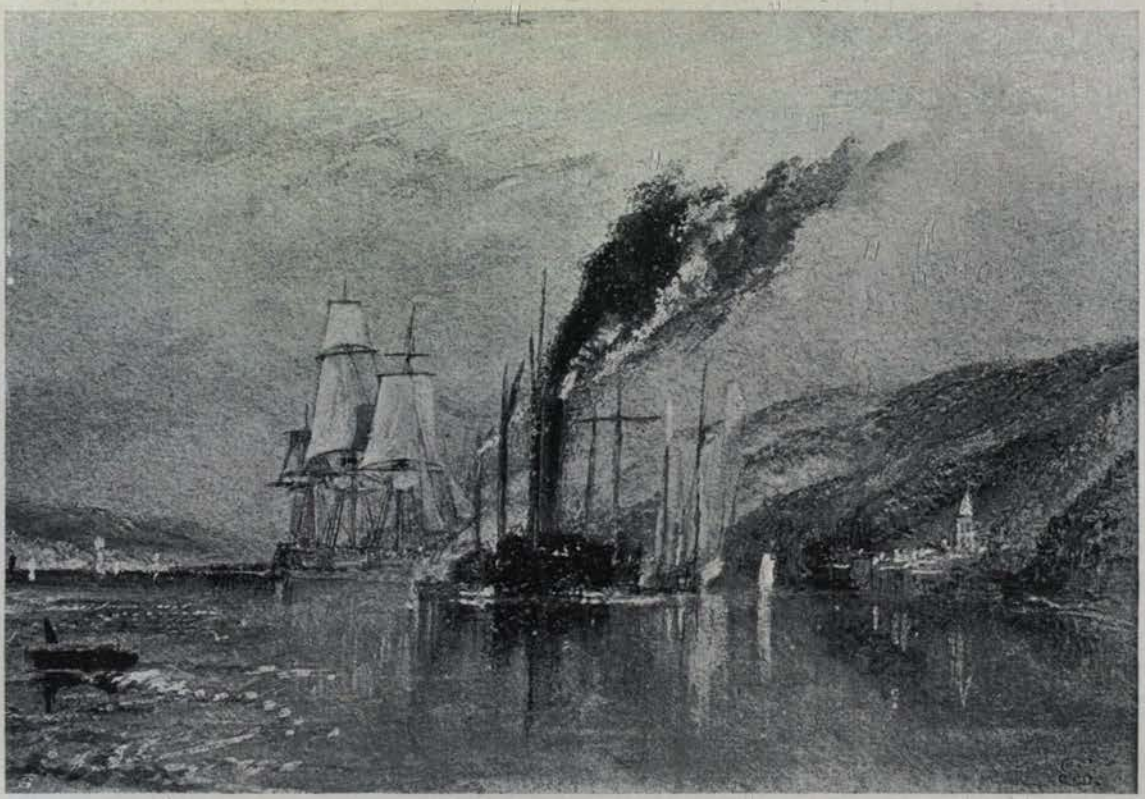


PARIS: THE PONT NEUF — In the National Gallery, London

W 25. Body-Colour on Grey Paper, 1833-35

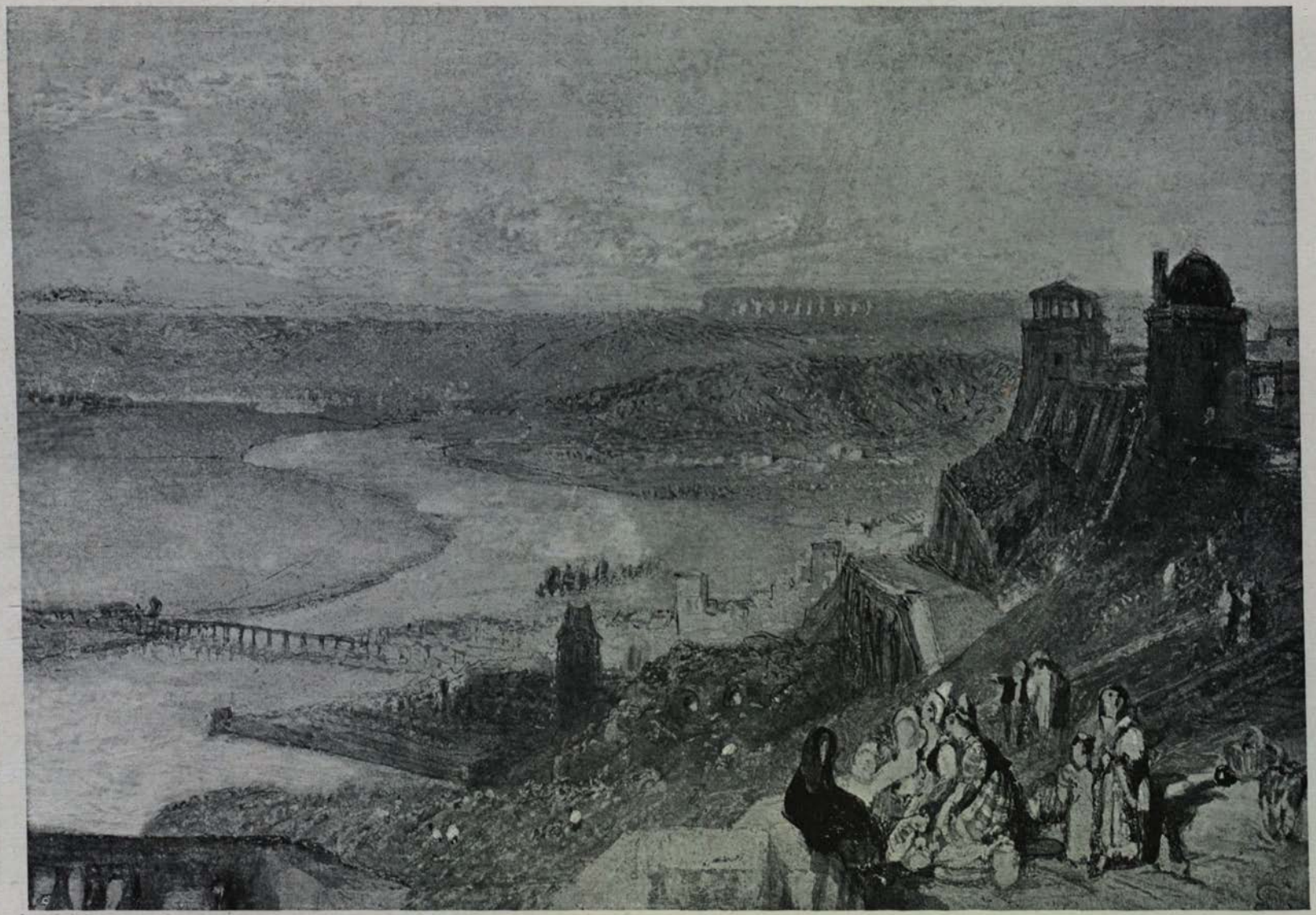
HARFLEUR — In the National Gallery, London

W 26. Body-Colour on Grey Paper; Engraved by R. Brandard for "Wanderings by the Seine," First Series, 1834



BETWEEN QUILLEBŒUF AND VILLEQUIER — In the National Gallery, London

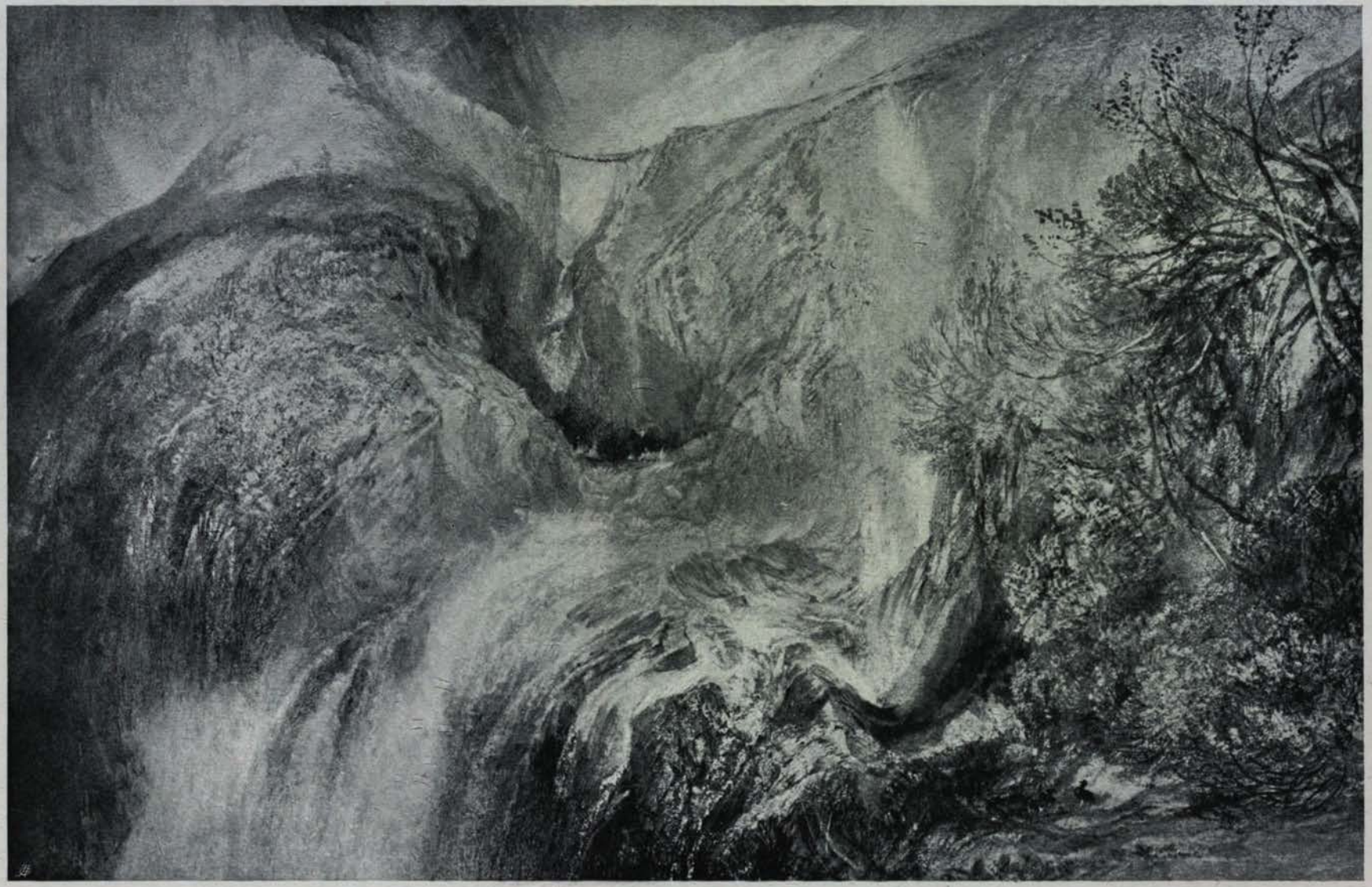
W 27. Body-Colour on Grey Paper; Engraved by J. B. Allen, 1835, for "Wanderings by the Seine," Second Series



ST. GERMAIN

In the National Gallery, London

W 28. Water-Colour, about 1836; Engraved by W. R. Smith, 1838, for Part 24 of "England and Wales"



THE CHAIN BRIDGE OVER THE TEES

In the Collection of Abraham Haworth, Esq.; Reproduced from a Photograph lent by Mr. George Allen

EHRENBREITSTEIN

In the Collection of George N. Stevens, Esq.

W 29. Body-Colour on Grey Paper, 1833-35

STUDY OF A CHURCH, TOURS — In the National Gallery, London

W 30. Body-Colour on Grey Paper; Engraved by S. Fisher for "Wanderings by the Seine," Second Series, 1835

ST. DENIS — In the National Gallery, London

W 31. Body-Colour on Grey Paper; Engraved by T. Jeavons for "Wanderings by the Seine," Second Series, 1835

PARIS: HOTEL DE VILLE AND PONT D'ARCOLE

In the National Gallery, London

W 32. Water-Colour, about 1833; Engraved by J. T. Willmore, 1834, for Part 18 of "England and Wales"

LLANBERIS LAKE

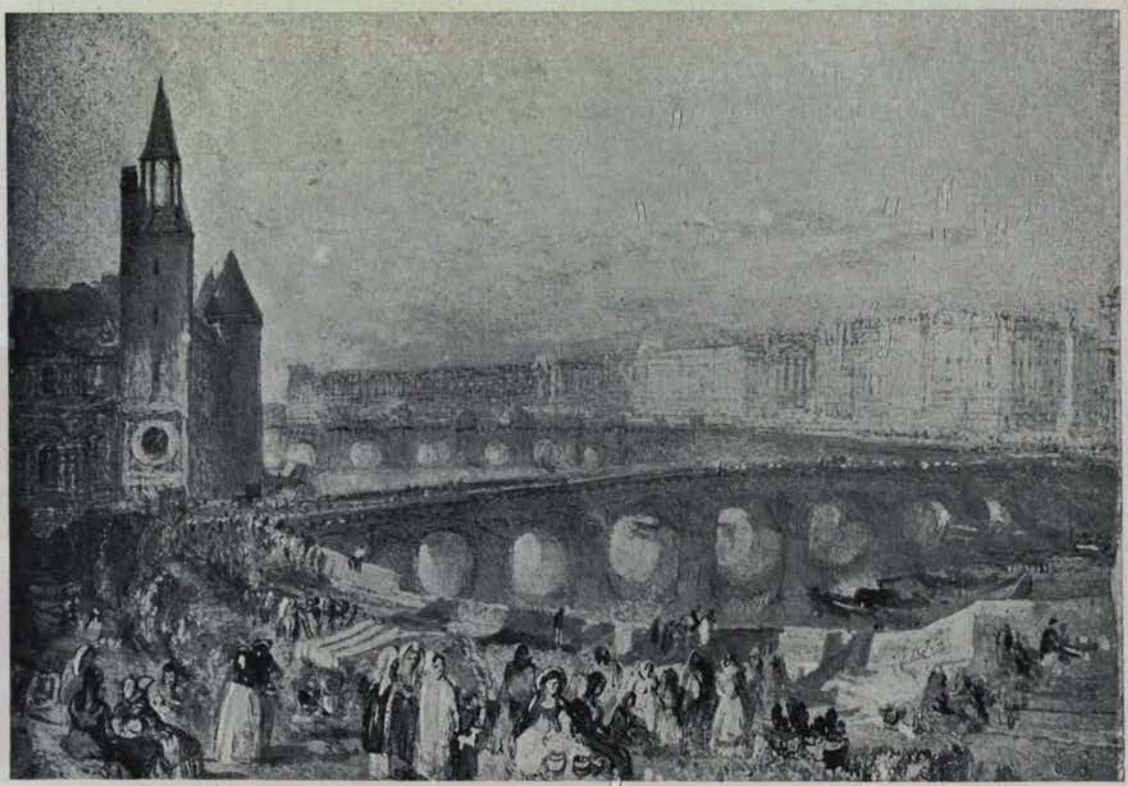
Formerly in the Vaughan Collection; Reproduced from a photograph lent by Mr. George Allen

W 33. Body-Colour on Grey Paper, 1835-45

ROUEN

In the National Gallery, London

W 34. Body-Colour on Grey Paper; Engraved by W. Radclyffe for "Wanderings by the Seine," 1835



PARIS: THE FLOWER MARKET AND THE PONT AU CHANGE

In the National Gallery, London

Body-Colour on Grey Paper

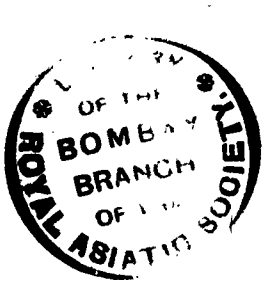
STUDY ON THE RHINE

In the Collection of Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, Bart., M.P.

Water-Colour, National Gallery, London. Engraved by G. H. Phillips, Jan. 1, 1827

ARUNDEL CASTLE, ON THE RIVER ARUN

"Rivers of England" Series


OF THE
BOMBAY
BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

W 11. Water-Colour, 1824; in the Farnley Hall Collection

JOHANNISBERG

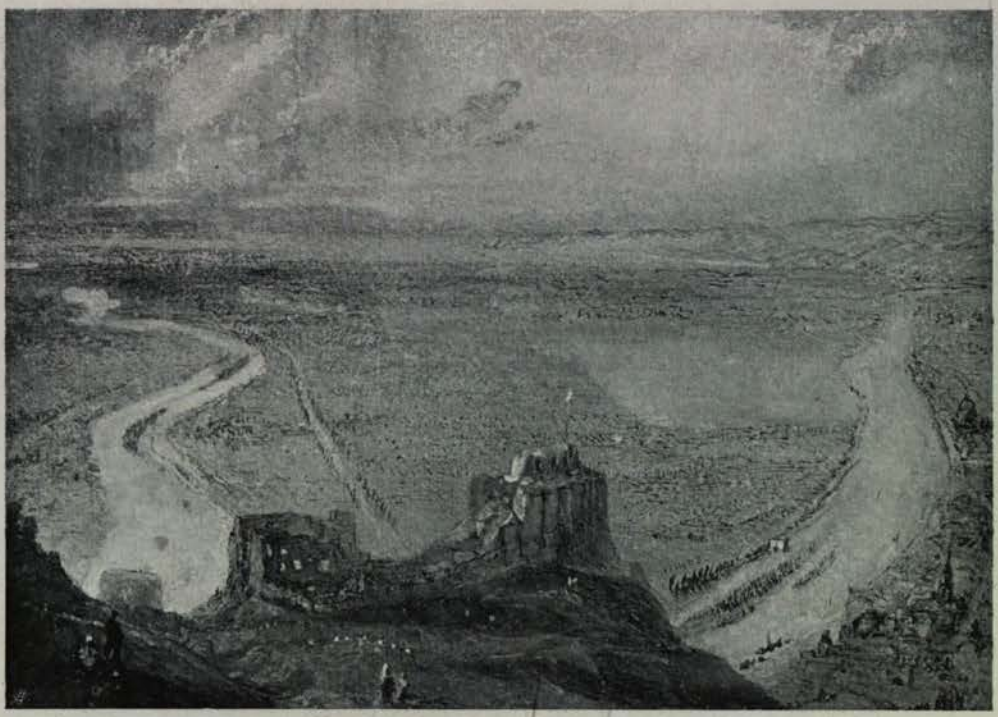
Reproduced from a Photograph lent by Mr. George Allen

W 12. Water-Colour, 1820-1825; formerly in the Ruskin Collection

FARNLEY, FROM OTLEY

Reproduced from a Photograph lent by Mr. George Allen

W 35. Body-Colour on Grey Paper; Engraved by J. Smith for "Wanderings by the Seine," 1835

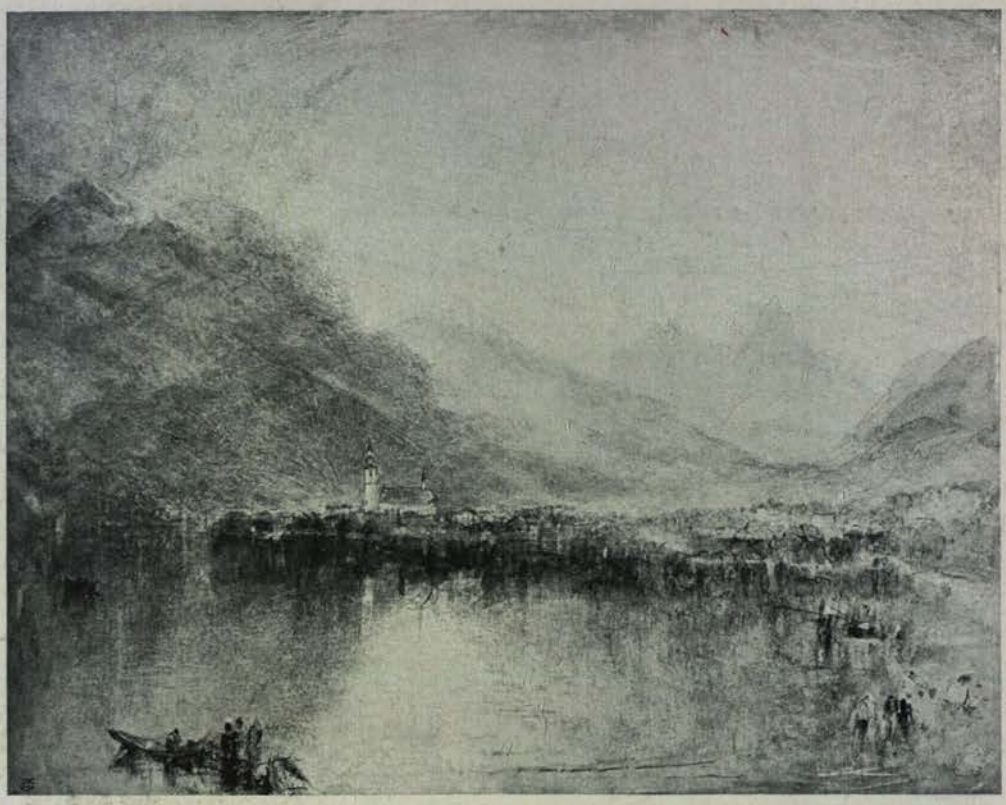


CHÂTEAU GAILLARD FROM THE EAST — In the National Gallery, London

W 36. Body-Colour on Grey Paper, 1833-35

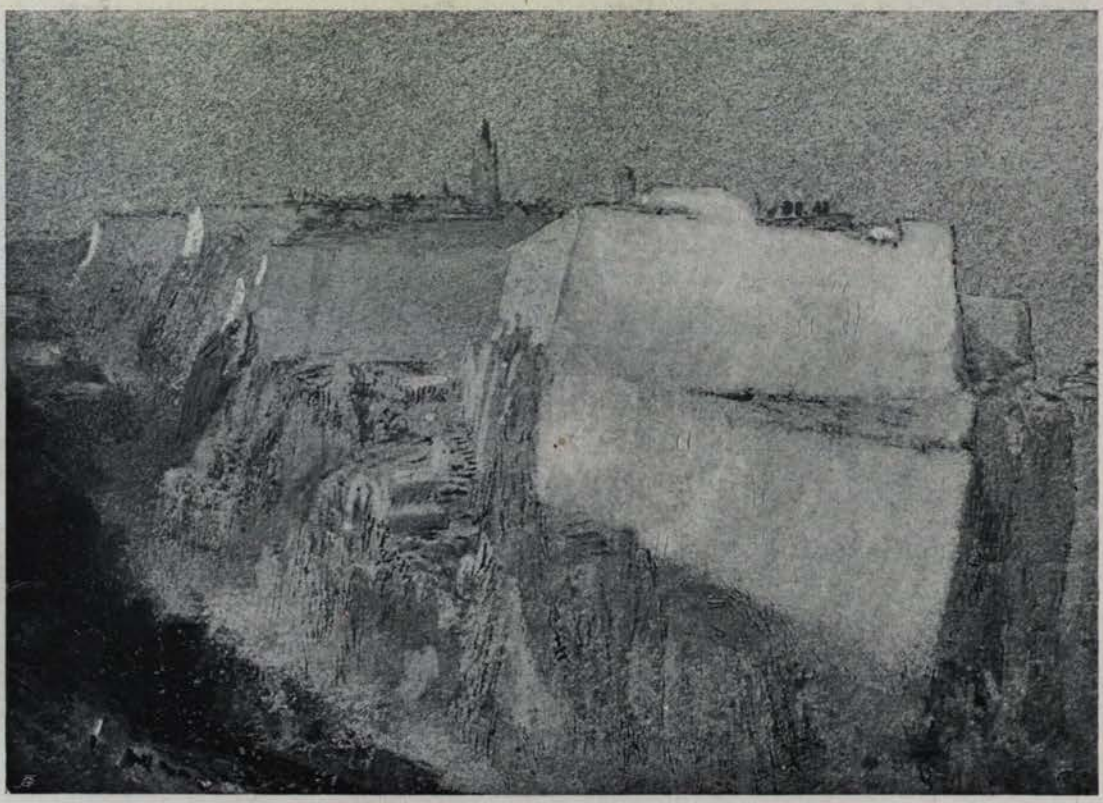
HONFLEUR — In the National Gallery, London

W 37. Water-Colour Sketch, Late Period; Redrawn for Mr. Munro in 1843



ARTH, FROM THE LAKE OF ZUG — In the National Gallery, London

W 38. Body-Colour on Grey Paper; Best Late Period



LUXEMBOURG (1) — In the National Gallery, London

BRIDGE AND ALPINE PASS

In the National Gallery, London

W 40 Water-Colour Sketch, Final Manner

DRACHENFELS

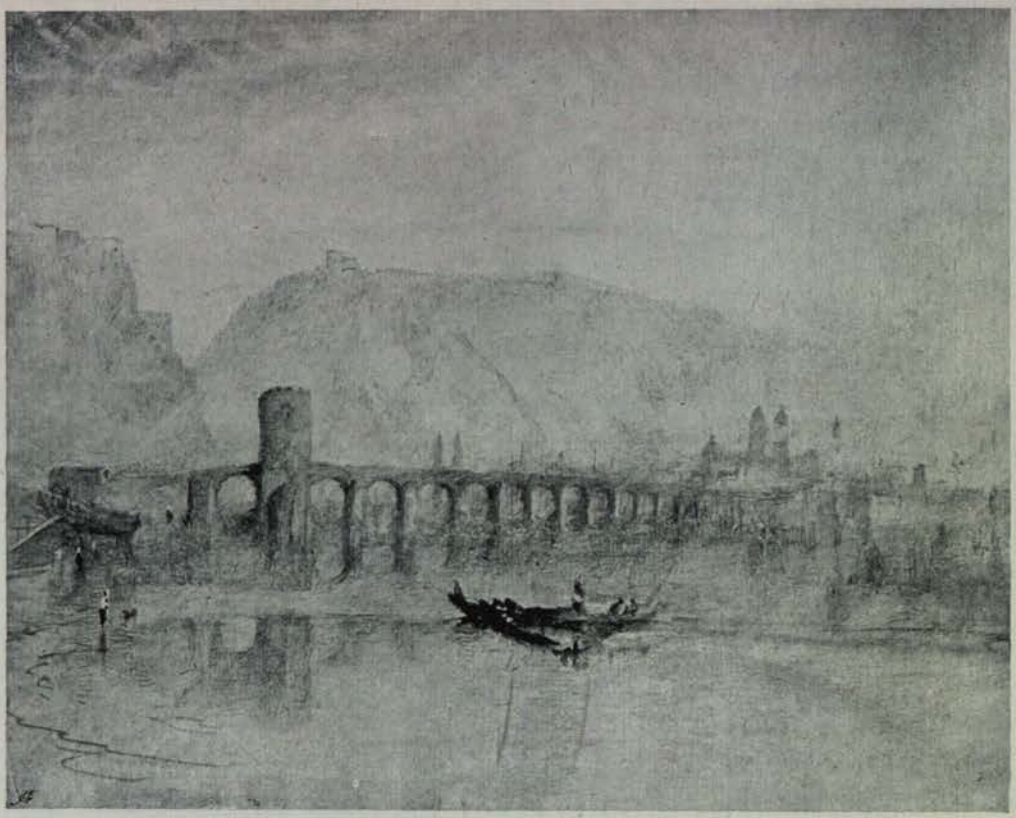
In the National Gallery, London

W 41. Body-Colour on Grey Paper; Best Late Period

LUXEMBOURG (?)

In the National Gallery, London

W 42. Water-Colour Sketch, 1842

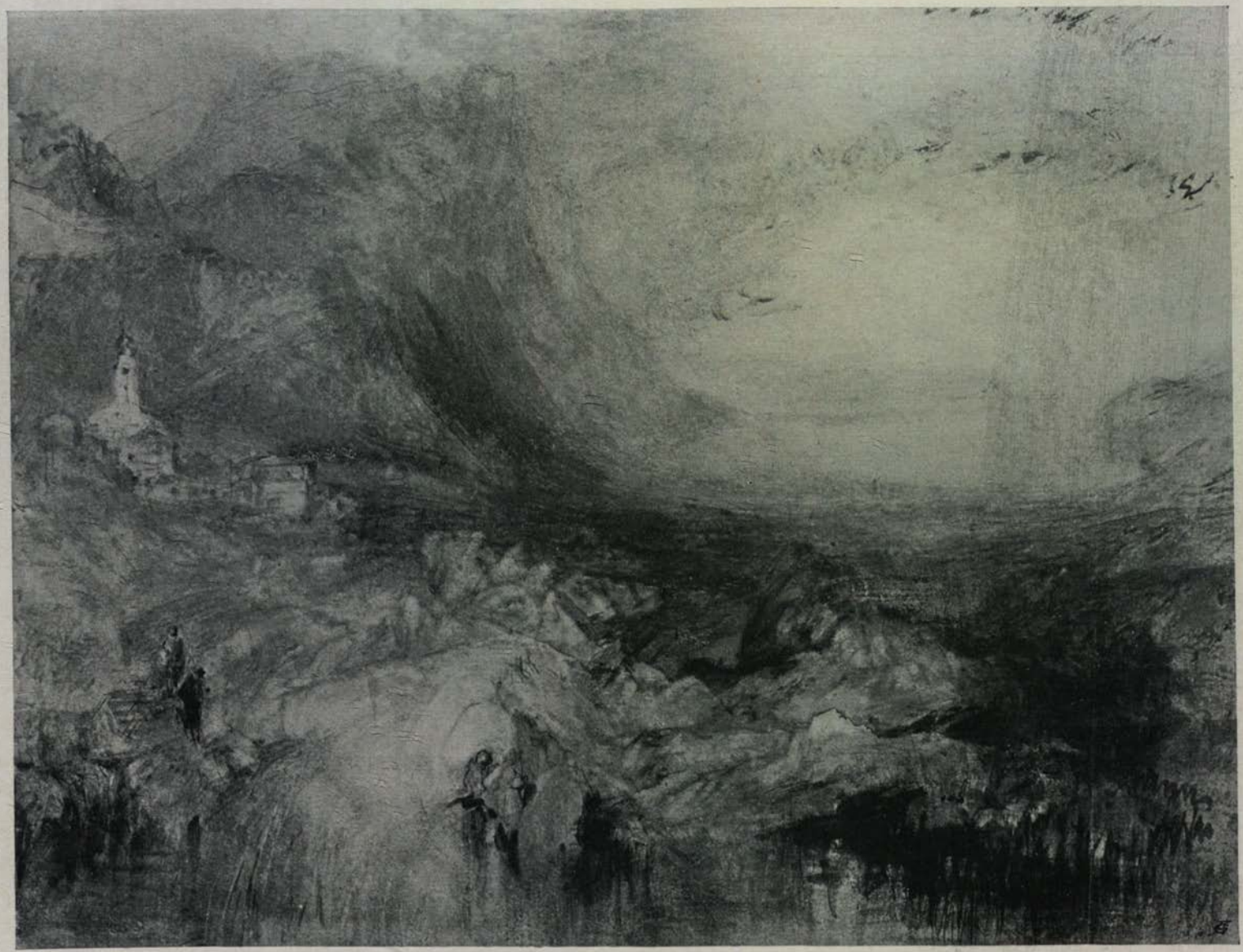


COBLENTZ: BRIDGE ON THE MOSELLE — In the National Gallery, London

W 43. Water-Colour Sketch, Final Manner

VENICE: ENTRANCE TO THE GRAND CANAL — In the National Gallery, London

W 44. Water-Colour Sketch; Redrawn for John Ruskin in 1843



GOLDAU: LAKE OF ZUG IN THE DISTANCE

In the National Gallery, London

W 45. Water-Colour, 1843; Formerly in the Ruskin Collection

PASS OF ST. GOTHARD, NEAR FAIDO

Reproduced from a Photograph lent by Mr. George Allen

VENICE: THE GRAND CANAL, LOOKING BACK TO THE SALUTE

In the National Gallery, London

TURNER AND HIS ENGRAVERS

HE spectacle of a great painter presiding over a school of engravers devoting itself to the interpretation of his works, no uncommon one in the history of art during the last four centuries, presented itself in the case of Turner in all probability for the last time. Thus Raphael had brought under the spell of his ideal Marc Antonio Raimondi, Agostino Veneziano, and Marco da Ravenna; and Rubens had attuned to complete harmony with his genius Scheltius à Bolswert, Lucas Vorsterman, and Paulus Pontius. But whilst Raphael's engravers, working almost exclusively from drawings in chalk or pen and ink, had the way to correctness of form and purity of line made straight before them, and Rubens' were in the advantageous position of following a master not less admirable for rich colouring than for forcible chiaroscuro, the engravers who undertook the translation of Turner's works into black and white met at the first start with apparently insuperable difficulties. For line and chiaroscuro, the characteristic limitations of engraving as understood by the Old Masters, were qualities alien upon the whole to Turner's genius, particularly in the majority of the drawings which he prepared for the engravers. In these the most conspicuous qualities are brilliancy of tone and complexity of detail, obtained by the use of strong local colour in the foreground, supporting less intense but not less pronounced tints in the distance and sky, and assisted by manipulation of the surface of the paper.

The task set before Turner's engravers demanded therefore judgment no less than technical skill; and it is not too much to say that, although the engravers of the first half of the nineteenth century had been fully trained in the use of mechanical resources more complex than those of the art at any previous period of its history, even they would have proved unequal to it had not the painter himself incessantly watched over the progress of the plates. The marked inferiority of the renderings of Turner's work by the same engravers, after the guiding hand of the painter was no more, shows indeed that this is no over-statement of the facts. For while he may fairly claim to have revived during his lifetime the conditions which inspired the great schools of Rome and Antwerp, he left at his death a band of engravers only capable of producing, with an enthusiastic devotion akin to that of the Parmesan school of

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Toschi, copies endowed with every merit except resemblance to the originals.

The first engraving after Turner, at that time beginning his career as a draughtsman for topographical publications, was issued, in the *Copper Plate Magazine*, on May 1, 1794, when he was just nineteen years old. It was not, of course, to be expected that the youthful artist would find at his disposal any one of the more famous of the body of excellent engravers then at work in London ; but it must be admitted that he was more than ordinarily unfortunate in the earliest translations of his works into black and white. It can only be said that, whatever their biographical value, the plates (about twenty-five in number) executed from his drawings before 1799 are destitute of artistic interest. But if Fortune was unfavourable to him at first, she certainly made amends when two of his drawings were bought for engraving as headpieces to the Oxford Almanac. The reputation of the Almanac, even at that time a venerable institution with above a century of tradition behind it, assured the employment of an engraver of established character and ability ; and the sum (150 guineas) paid to James Basire for reproducing each drawing upon copper, may truly be said to have profited Turner little less directly than the modest payments of ten guineas which he himself received. It was, besides, unquestionably a compliment to Turner to be called upon, at the age of twenty-four, to follow in the footsteps of men of mature, balanced style, such as Edward and Michael Rooker, in whose hands these almanac headings had recently achieved artistic distinction of no mean order. Nor can we complain if Turner showed his appreciation of the compliment by adhering rigidly to the lines which his forerunners had laid down. It cannot be supposed that Basire, an excellent if somewhat dry-mannered engraver, trained in the traditions of an elder school, would have proved responsive to any attempt to add to the accepted architectural composition, atmospheric effects, such as were even then becoming characteristic of Turner in his more ambitious works. The existence in the British Museum of a trial proof of the *Oriel College*, touched with white chalk, proves that the painter, whatever the distance in their ages and reputations, exercised some censorship over the engraver. Turner executed ten drawings for the almanacs ; two of them were paid for in 1799, one, *Merton College Chapel*, in 1801 ; the remaining seven (only six of which were, however, engraved) together in 1803–4 ; he received the original rate of remuneration for each. The plates are all signed by James Basire ; but Mr. Wedmore, in the "Dictionary of National Biography," has expressed doubts as to

which of the members of the Basire family, several generations of whom produced engravers of eminence, actually worked upon them. As, however, the elder, James Basire, died, according to the same authority, in 1802, he at least cannot have touched any but the three earliest; while his grandson, who was born in 1796, can scarcely have begun to practise his art until after the last was published (1811).

Following immediately as it does in chronological sequence the latest of the somewhat stiff almanac headings, the first line engraving in what would now be recognised as the distinctively Turneresque style, produces for an instant the idea that the genius of the painter burst out into sudden blaze. But upon reflexion the student remembers that not only was the drawing for the almanac itself eight years old, and executed withal in some degree in the conventional style of an elder generation, but that Turner had by this time already painted the *Macon*, the *Spithead*, and many other great oil pictures; had executed the majestic Swiss water-colours, and had issued above twenty plates of *Liber Studiorum*.

These events in the course of Turner's career are commonplaces in the history of English art; but less familiar is the train of circumstances which led to the appearance upon the scene of a band of sympathetic and accomplished engravers eager to spread abroad the ideals which the maturing genius of the painter gradually realised; while still less has due recognition been awarded to the intuition of the *impresario* who, linking those two forces, inaugurated the brilliant final period in the annals of British engraving.

John Britton, in whose "Fine Arts of the English School" the print of *Pope's Villa* by John Pye (to which the foregoing lines refer) appeared, was the most able of a race at once antiquaries, draughtsmen, authors and publishers, called into existence by the fashion for books on mediæval archæology which ran high in the earlier days of the Gothic revival. It is difficult to do justice within limited compass to the influence of Britton over the development of line engraving in the nineteenth century; but it is essential to mention in this place one of his numerous publications, the "Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain." For this book, throughout its slow-progressing appearance in periodic form, displayed a gradual advance in the quality of the plates which throws most instructive light upon the origin of the Turnerian school. The illustrations to the first volume, completed in 1807, exhibit, for the most part, the solid merits of the old-fashioned manner, no less worthily than the Oxford Almanacs engraved by Basire. But at the

end of this volume are to be found two prints, the first productions of two youthful artists, Frederick Mackenzie the draughtsman and John Le Keux the engraver, who, working in combination, here at length secured the firm drawing, brilliant texture and accurate detail so long the goal of Britton's ambition. Upon this slender foundation he succeeded in building up a school of engravers in whose hands the whole character of landscape engraving underwent a complete revolution, culminating with the introduction of steel plates at a somewhat later period. From this school Turner drew numerous recruits, and there is evidence that he watched its early progress with interest, since, when the question of the choice of an engraver to reproduce his picture of *High Street, Oxford*, arose in 1809, he remarks in a letter to the publisher: "'Britton's Antiquity' contains some good specimens of engraving for depth, clearness, and well-laid lines."

It must, therefore, have been with some certainty of seeing a successful rendering of his picture of *Pope's Villa* that he consented to its publication in a work that was receiving Britton's particular attention. A letter upon the subject written by him to Britton, and containing the well-known passage encouraging the critic to espouse "the part of Elevated Landscape against the aspersions of map-making criticism," is unusually complacent and discursive. But whatever his hopes, it is certain that they were far exceeded by the plate actually produced, for his comment to the engraver is said to have been, "You can see the lights; had I known there was a man living could have done that, I would have had it done before." If, as Mr. Roget has remarked, "the introduction of Mackenzie's talent to the world, and the happy union thereof with that of the engravers John and Henry Le Keux, was amongst the proudest achievements of Britton's tact and good taste," how much more could he pride himself upon the insight which brought the genius of Turner and the ability of Pye into conjunction! It is proper to record the tradition that Pye had, as a fact, executed a plate after Turner, before the *Pope's Villa*, while he was indeed still in the employment of James Heath, whose signature it actually bears, but it is only necessary to do so in order to point out its historical insignificance. For it is certain that the production of Britton's negotiations was the means of securing to Pye the painter's approval and support, and circumstances soon arose enabling the expression of that appreciation to take a practical form.

While the plate of *Pope's Villa* was in progress, Turner was approached by Mr. Wyatt, of Oxford, the well-known printseller, with a com-

mission for two pictures of Oxford, one to represent the High Street, the other a distant view of the city, to be reproduced in black and white on a large scale. A remarkably interesting series of letters relating to this transaction has been printed (in chaotic disorder) by Thornbury. In one of the earliest of them (November 23, 1809) Turner names five engravers, amongst whom Pye is not to be found, as capable of undertaking the plates which Wyatt had in view, adding, "the question is certainly of the first importance to me; but you must decide," and referring in a postscript to Britton's "Architectural Antiquities" in the words already quoted. Ultimately Middiman was selected to engrave the *High Street*, and throughout 1809 there are references to his progress in the letters. Before the plate was very far advanced, however, some time in 1810, as the date upon the finished proof in the British Museum shows, the engraver of *Pope's Villa* had gained the warm approbation of Turner, who at once determined that the *High Street* should be completed by no other hand. Fresh arrangements were made, upon what terms the letters do not record, and the first Oxford print appeared (1812) as the joint production of Middiman and Pye, while Pye assumed supreme control over the second plate, *Oxford from the Abingdon Road*, published six years later.

Whatever the arrangements which placed Pye in the most prominent position with regard to these plates, it is certain that it was not such as reflected any discredit upon Middiman, who proved, in the plates illustrating Whitaker's "History of Richmondshire," a coadjutor only less valuable to Turner than Pye himself. It is possible, indeed, that Middiman had originally undertaken no more than the preliminary etching of the *High Street, Oxford*, although allusions to his work in the letters do not lead to that conclusion. It was a process of considerable importance in the conduct of engraving at that period, producing little less than half of the effective lines upon the copper, and one he frequently carried out for Pye, both in the plates for the "History of Richmondshire," and in those for Hakewill's "Picturesque Tour of Italy."

Of the twenty plates for the "History of Richmondshire," the earliest, *Hardraw Fall*, was published upon October 1, 1818; the latest, *Wycliffe*, upon March 1, 1823. The *Heysham* is the only one of the drawings bearing a date (1818) which has come under the notice of the writer. But, as documents published by Sir Walter Armstrong, in his book upon the painter, and letters, printed by Mr. Cosmo Monkhouse, serve to show, Turner began to make expeditions in search of materials

for these compositions as early as 1815 and 1816. The eighteen drawings to illustrate the "Tour of Italy" are apparently none of them dated. It is known, however, that Hakewill's original sketches, upon which they were rounded, were made in 1816–17, while the earliest plate, the *Bridge and Castle of Sant' Angelo*, appeared on October 1, 1818, and the last, the *Forum Romanum*, was published upon August 1, 1820. Pye, Middiman, Rawle, J. Landseer, and other engravers, almost all of whom had at one time worked under the vigilant eye of Britton, contributed to the success of Hakewill's "Tour," as they had partaken in the triumph of the "History of Richmondshire," and it was shared by others who, unlike them, were destined to add to their renown by translations of the painter's later works.

It is necessary to insist somewhat pedantically upon the exact moment of Turner's first journey to Italy (he had only visited Piedmont upon his earlier Continental tour), for it has been generally admitted that, as far as the course of a man's life can be diverted by a single incident, the direction of Turner's genius was changed by it. Yet, although a flood of loose talk about periods and styles, greater perhaps than ever deluged an artist's biography, has been poured forth in relation to his pictures and their motives, few serious attempts have been made to settle the exact chronology of his life and paintings. Thus writers who ought to have known better have allowed it to be inferred from their words that the Hakewill subjects were drawn in the first instance from Nature by Turner, although it is certain that only the seven latest published plates can have benefited even in their final retouching from his personal knowledge of the scenes they represent; whilst the late Mr. Monkhouse, in his "Life of Turner," actually speaks of Italian influence being visible in the Richmondshire drawings.

It is not necessary to inquire here whether the lack of literary material for Turner's biography is due to deliberate mystification, or mere taciturnity on his part, but it is permissible to point out that what he failed to record may occasionally be learned from others. It so happens that at the time of Turner's visit to Rome Sir Thomas Lawrence was also there, concluding the business of the Royal mission entrusted to him by the Prince Regent, by painting the portrait of Pope Pius VII. During the summer of 1819 his letters to England are full of entreaties addressed to their common friends, to urge upon Turner the importance of visiting Rome while "his genius," as Lawrence, quoting Horace Walpole in one place (June 27, 1819), expresses it, "is in flower." "It is injustice to his fame

and his country," he exclaims, "to let the finest period of his genius pass away . . . without visiting these scenes. . . . I am perpetually reminded of him," and much more that appears additionally flattering from the context. For the President's letters are almost invariably filled with the record either of his own artistic triumphs, or of the relaxation which he permitted himself occasionally to take in the company of very great people. Indeed, so much is this the case that, having induced Turner to come to Rome, he entirely neglected to mention his presence there. The landscape painter would, to be sure, have found himself sufficiently ill at ease in the society of the Metternichs in real life, and perhaps Lawrence thought it better to keep him out of it even upon paper. Fortunately, however, he has noted in another letter the period of Turner's departure; and the painter has himself left, in a drawing at Farnley Hall, a precise record of the date (January 15, 1820) of his crossing Mont Cenis on his way home.

The fruits of Turner's pilgrimage, beginning with *Rome from the Vatican* and the *Bay of Baiæ*, were shortly visible upon the walls of the Academy; its effect upon his drawings for the engravers, less obvious but not less forcible, has now to be discussed. But first it is necessary to retrace our steps to the year 1807, which, according to the accepted accounts, saw the beginning of *Liber Studiorum*, and having followed the course of that work, until, at the time of this expedition to Italy, it finally came to a standstill, to describe the produce of Turner's connection with the Cookes; since this connection, arising as early as 1812, lasted until after his return from Rome and the appearance of the transformation wrought in his style by that great epoch in his career.

"Liber Studiorum: Illustrative of Landscape Compositions, viz., Historical, Mountainous, Pastoral, Marine, and Architectural, by J. M. W. Turner, R.A.," the title given by the artist to his work, at once declares the scope of the book and suggests the rivalry with Claude to which it is said to have owed its inception. The history of this inception and that of each separate plate in the series, from the earliest sketch in which the composition took form upon paper to the last shadowy indistinctness in which it took flight from the copper plate, has been worked out by Mr. Rawlinson and Mr. Roget with a scientific minuteness such as has been expended upon no other theme in the annals of English art. While a flock of subjective critics, from the days of the author of "Modern Painters" downwards has made the book its pasture, nibbling it bare of every trace of spiritual meaning that the prints could be supposed to

possess. Thus, from the standpoint of the student, *Liber Studiorum* is an exhausted mine, and the most elaborate of the subjective critics has, to borrow a forcible metaphor of Sir Walter Armstrong, long ago "squeezed *Liber* dry as far as its possibilities of an esoteric meaning go."

It has often been maintained that one of the principal circumstances to spur the painter to the production of *Liber Studiorum* was entire inability to sell his exhibited pictures. His financial affairs, it is true, at the time when he undertook the publication, can scarcely have begun to show more than the beginnings of the prosperity they afterwards assumed. Yet in commissions for groups of large drawings (amongst others, eight for Sir Richard Colt Hoare, 1799; five for Mr. Beckford, 1800; an unknown number for Mr. Fawkes, 1803); and in payments for important oil pictures (from such patrons as Lord Yarborough, 1803; Lord Egremont, 1804; Lord de Tabley, 1806) he must have laid at least the foundations of the fortune of £140,000 he ultimately derived from a public which rejected and despised him. His transactions with the engravers and publishers, through whose agency so large a portion of that fortune was subsequently acquired, had not, however, at that time developed to any great extent. It is, therefore, improbable that Turner attempted to find a publisher to issue in periodical numbers, according to the custom of the time, his first great series of engravings; and in ultimately deciding to undertake its publication himself, he did nothing unusual with artists at that period. Nor is there any reason why, had he adopted the ordinary business procedure of his day—so much less exacting than that of the present—he should have failed, as he unquestionably did, to attract the attention of a public, prepared by the eminence he had achieved in other directions, to accord a friendly welcome to his venture. If, as he petulantly remarks upon the margin of one of the proofs, everything "conspired against the work," it must be confessed that the author was one of the principal conspirators. Thus even modern research has failed to unearth a copy of the original proposals for the work, known to have been issued before 1808, since an account of them is printed in an obscure critical review in that year. Nor has it discovered any actual advertisement of the publication earlier than 1816, when, seven or eight years after the first and second, the eleventh and twelfth numbers were ready for the subscribers. There is, it is true, apart from the traces of the preliminary prospectus already mentioned, evidence that the desirability of advertising had occurred to Turner at an earlier stage. But this evidence, a note addressed to Charles Turner the engraver,

whose name as publisher is to be found upon the plates in the second, third and fourth numbers, itself only shows that the painter's idea had borne no practical fruit. It is written upon a proof of a plate published in the third number (June 1808), but possibly prepared for production in the second (February 1808), and contains an allusion to the imminent temporary closing of Turner's gallery which presumably carries back the date of writing to some time towards the close of the summer of 1807. Taking the form of a scolding addressed to the engraver and publisher, it incidentally reveals the disorganisation into which the scheme had already fallen. "Respecting advertising," it runs, "you know full well that everything ought to have been done long ago!" And, after complaining that he had not "seen a word in the papers," the painter proceeds to urge the withdrawal of the proposed advertisement from the *Times* and its transference to any other newspaper which could, at short notice, find space for its insertion.

This inefficient attempt at announcing the work was probably only one of the causes of its failure. In the long space of twelve years consumed by the production, at very irregular intervals, of the fourteen parts which alone appeared, the patience of subscribers, accustomed even to the vagaries of periodical publication, may well have become exhausted. But the principal source of disaster was the disingenuous conduct of the author himself. The subscribers were divided into two classes, of whom one paid at first two-fifths more than the amount, and later twice the amount paid by the other, and in consideration of this became entitled to proof impressions of the plates. Yet nothing is more certain than the entire impartiality with which Turner distributed ordinary prints to subscribers of both classes. Nor is this all. At a later period two of the engravers and the printer of *Liber Studiorum* signed a solemn document in which they declared that the plates were incapable of producing more than twenty-five or thirty impressions of fine quality. Yet, notwithstanding this, five thousand prints, taken with few exceptions from the seventy-one published plates, were found in Turner's house after his death; and of these two thousand have been described as excellent in quality. It is therefore evident that a number of the choicest impressions from each plate, dangerously approaching the limit of those which, according to the declaration, it was able to produce, had been retained by the artist, in defiance of his duty, if not of his engagements, to the subscribers. The print-buying public treated by Turner in this manner may have been limited, but it was unquestionably both learned and critical. The high standard of taste maintained in

England at that period, when the classical principles of criticism were still studied and believed, had made it the most profitable market for the art-treasures scattered by political troubles upon the Continent. And a high degree of cultivation prevailed which, whatever its attitude towards contemporary art, could detect an inferior print as readily as a false quantity, and would equally scorn it. Turner himself is thus largely to blame if the appreciation of *Liber Studiorum* was reserved for a posterity to whom alone he allowed its merits to be revealed.

The date assigned by Mr. Rawlinson to the publication of the first number, and hitherto universally accepted, is January 20, 1807; but if this point can be proved to be unassailable, another in the history of *Liber Studiorum* advanced by the same great authority, and received with all the deference due to him, will apparently have to yield before inquiry. This, the statement that Turner's earliest plan contemplated the engraving of the plates in aquatint, presupposes the conclusion that the single plate, the *Bridge and Goats*, executed by F. C. Lewis in that manner, was a preliminary experiment, the failure of which, in the painter's eyes, led to the subsequent adoption of the mezzotint method. The evidence for questioning one or other of these views is afforded by Mr. Rawlinson himself in the first appendix to his book. He there prints three letters written by Turner to Lewis and relating to the plate in question. The latest of these alone is dated (Dec. 14, 1807); but the first mentions that Turner was then living at West End, Upper Mall, Hammersmith (whence, indeed, according to Mr. Roget, the second letter is also addressed), a fact which the catalogue of the Academy exhibition of 1807 fails to record. The catalogue, where, as a rule, the addresses of the artist were carefully noted, does moreover insert Turner's Hammersmith address in the following year, whence it may be presumed that he had taken possession of the house after the opening of the exhibition of 1807 but before that of the following year. Any contention that the date of the last letter is an accidental error seems thus to be barred; nor can it be said that either aspect of the question is seriously affected by the statement made by Lewis, above forty years after the transaction had taken place, that, as far as he could recollect, he had always considered this plate as the earliest engraved by any one for the work. Moreover, if the historical position of the aquatint plate as an experimental attempt be maintained as impregnable, not only must the accepted date of publication of the first part be abandoned, but the possibility of the execution of ten plates in mezzotint by a single engraver between December 14,

1807, and February 20, 1808 (the date of publication of the second part) will have to be admitted.

Upon the other hand, if the rejection of the usually received date of publication of the first part in favour of a period after December 1807 be admitted, some analogy, drawn from the appearance of later numbers in pairs, may be accepted as supporting a conjecture that it was produced simultaneously with the second in February 1808. And the project for advertisement, described in a note written by the painter, as with fair presumption has already been shown, in the late summer of 1807, may further be taken as referring to the forthcoming publication of both the first and second parts, and its apparently belated position in relation to the first alone be thus accounted for. In favour of this view it must also be added that the plates of the first part have no date of publication engraved upon them, although this is somewhat discounted by the fact that the plates of the second not only bear a date but are further differentiated from those of the first by the addition of the title of "Professor of Perspective in the Royal Academy" to the painter's name.

In any case, however, it is impossible to maintain that a plate completed in the last month of 1807 was a preliminary trial of method, either for a series of prints, five of which had already appeared eleven months before, or for one which, solely in consequence of its failure, was inaugurated with ten engravings in an entirely different manner within two months after its execution. Nor is the fact that it is the only print of the series engraved throughout in aquatint especially in favour of its being a preliminary experiment, since, although mezzotint was described in the prospectus quoted in the "Review of Publications in Art," 1808, as the process selected for *Liber Studiorum*, Turner would doubtless have considered himself as much at liberty to alter the style of the engravings as to enhance, in the way he did, the price of the parts after the work had been for some time in progress.

Whatever relation these experiments may bear to the history of *Liber Studiorum*, there can be no question of their tentative character. And, in the light or the possible fate of the work had they proved more successful, it is curious to observe the rapid change in the painter's attitude from toleration, and even, it must be supposed, some degree of liking, to a feeling apparently of contempt for the aquatint process. His objection to it culminated, it would seem, in the case of Lewis, in what he considered its extravagant costliness; yet, in a well-known note upon a proof of the *Dunstanborough Castle*, one of two plates in which Charles Turner made use of that method

in the sky, he indignantly speaks of the device as an "indulgence." Both of these plates, the *Dunstanborough* and the *Bridge in Middle Distance*, were produced in June 1808, and it is probable that the plate of *Calm* passed through the earlier stages, revealing Turner's own attempt to master the despised process, not later than the same period. Turner, no doubt, had objections to aquatint upon artistic grounds, although there is nothing to prove that a letter to John Girtin (printed by Mr. Roget), in which they are believed to be darkly expressed, has anything to do with aquatint or with *Liber Studiorum*. And some technical difficulties, purposely exaggerated by Lewis, had also increased Turner's distrust of this method for the purpose he had in view. A more plausible reason for his disdain may, however, be sought in circumstances similar to those which are said to have inspired at a later period his dislike for steel plates upon their first introduction; its abuse, that is to say, for vulgar and commonplace purposes. The beginning of 1808 witnessed the publication of Ackerman's "Microcosm of London," a periodical production followed by numerous similar works, such as the histories of Westminster Abbey, the Universities, the Public Schools and the Royal Palaces. The appearance of these works, coinciding exactly with that of Turner's great undertaking, deluged the world with showily tinted prints, and completed the degradation of the aquatint manner. The extent of this decline may well have been foreseen by Turner at the time when the *Dunstanborough* was being engraved, while the increasing success of mezzotint in the hands of Turner and his assistants speedily deprived aquatint, even at its best, of all claim to rank as an alternative process for the plates of *Liber Studiorum*.

There is one circumstance which gives to the great collection of mezzotint plates connected with the title *Liber Studiorum* the highest interest and value. It is that amongst these prints—that is to say, not only the seventy-one plates actually published, and the twenty unpublished subjects usually supposed to have been intended to form part of the work, but also the dozen of plates, commonly called its "Sequel," whose connexion with the series is more questionable—are to be found the only engravings ever executed by Turner himself. Equally close supervision he exercised over all the engravings from his designs. But, while he is never known to have used the burin, even to retouch a plate, he acquired, perhaps through his youthful association with Raphael Smith, complete mastery over the artistic resources of working in mezzotint, if not of all its technical subtleties. The skill he showed appears indeed astonishing when it

is remembered that he can have had but little previous practice in scraping in mezzotint. But that displayed by the professional engravers who contributed to the work is scarcely less remarkable; for, although they had all ample experience of the method in portrait engraving, they mostly applied it to the interpretation of landscape for the first time under Turner's direction. They were unfortunately called upon but rarely after the discontinuance of *Liber Studiorum* to exercise the accomplishment they acquired during their connexion with it. But the direction taken by landscape art in general, and by Turner's genius in particular, after the year 1820, was such as to place the process in a disadvantageous position from an artistic point of view. So much was this the case that the introduction of steel plates, which shortly followed, whereby the unprofitable commercial qualities of mezzotint were largely obviated, failed to reinstate it in the favour of the publishers of landscape engravings.

There is every reason for believing that the increasingly slow progress and final cessation of *Liber Studiorum* was due to no other cause than the gradual divergence of Turner's aims from those it is possible for mezzotint to express. Nothing is more certain than that the work must from the beginning have been financially unprofitable. It is probable, indeed, that, in spite of the painter's eccentric business arrangements, the losses became less as the publication proceeded. For not only did its existence become gradually known to a circle of admirers, limited perhaps, to whom Turner had been at no pains to announce its original appearance, but the cost of engraving the later had been cut down far below that of the earlier numbers of the series. Turner's absence in Italy, lasting at the utmost for six months, which followed the production of the fourteenth number, could have been no serious interruption to the publication, since the last two pairs of parts had appeared at intervals of four and three years from each other; whereas the ardent desire for qualities unattainable in mezzotint, brilliancy of tone and intricacy of detail, which had long been taking form in his mind and matured almost suddenly after his return from Rome, breathes from every canvas and sketch he afterwards touched.

This explanation of the cause of the abandoning of *Liber Studiorum* before it was more than three-quarters completed is justified by an examination of the plates of the "Rivers of England," the earliest important series undertaken by him after returning from Italy. These prints, highly experimental as they are in character, display in many curious ways the painter's effort to inspire mezzotint with qualities alien to its natural character.

Sir Walter Armstrong, in his recently published volume upon Turner, while admitting that the artist's style of painting in water-colours underwent a great change about this period, traces its earliest dawn back to the time of the painter's first commission to make drawings for the "Views on the Southern Coast," in which his long connection with W. B. and G. Cooke had its origin. The reasons he gives for this change are somewhat remarkable; for, after acknowledging that in drawings prepared for the engraver before that time Turner worked in a "straightforward fashion," and noticing that about the period of his taking service with the Cookes a change in his style set in, he proceeds to say that the artist "modified his method in obedience to the requirements of the burin." That, having acquired in the execution and supervision or *Liber Studiorum* some conception of the adaptability of mezzo-tint—a "tone process," as Sir Walter calls it—for expressing uniformity of tone and largeness of composition, the painter came to the conclusion that line, being the counterpart of tone, could only express contrary effects, and "should never be called upon to carry broad and simple tones on to copper." In the course of his argument, Sir Walter alludes to the prodigious quantity of detail with which the drawings made by Turner for the engravers are crowded, and admits—what few will be prepared to dispute—that the effect from an artistic point of view was "not always happy." But when he declares it as his opinion that this detail was introduced with "no apparent object but to give the burin something to play with," and assumes that the painter, by refraining from sending any of the drawings to the Academy or other public exhibition (which unluckily is not the case), confessed his own sense of their short-comings, he will seem to many to be reasoning as if the descent of the weight of a clock, or the uncoiling of its mainspring, was caused by the revolution of the hands.

The opinion of Sir Walter Armstrong is received with a deference so nearly universal that it is necessary to bring forward some serious evidence in venturing to dispute it. Such testimony, however, some less familiar points in the general history of Turner's relations with the brothers Cooke may be said to afford. This connexion has probably suffered more from misrepresentation than any other episode in the artist's career. Although it has left many literary records of its existence, some of them of an interest such as but few of the written remains of the painter possess, it has been made familiar principally through the untoward events which led to its termination. Having been set forth at some length in an angry letter

written, under considerable provocation it must be owned, by W. B. Cooke, this crisis, with the addition of some ill-natured and unjustifiable comments, was easily converted by Mr. Thornbury into a myth, and took a prominent place in his account of Turner's martyrdom. But there can be no doubt, even from his version, that the arrangement was at least an extremely lucrative one to the artist. For, from the accounts printed by Mr. Thornbury, it appears that not only was the painter paid large sums for drawings bought outright by the Cookes, as those for the "Southern Coast" seem to have been, as well as for the copyright and loan of drawings for engraving, upon the principle adopted in the case of the "Rivers of England"; but he also received numerous small payments for retouching proofs of plates in course of execution from designs of other men. Besides this, he was enabled, through the medium of exhibitions held in the Cookes' gallery, to dispose of many of the drawings for the "History of Richmondshire" and "Picturesque Tour of Italy," executed, and paid for as regards copyright, several years before. The brothers were, moreover, in the habit of giving Turner commissions for large and costly pictures in water-colours to give dignity to their exhibitions, which were held certainly during three seasons (1822, '23 and '24), and perhaps during more. It is, indeed, not impossible that Turner persisted in the use of colour in his drawings for the engravers, when it must frequently have been perplexing to them, for the sake of the profit such works would afterwards bring in. It had been in his youth the almost universal habit of engravers' draughtsmen to work in colour; and in forsaking this fashion, while making the sketches for *Liber Studiorum* he was doubtless prompted more by his desire to imitate *Liber Veritatis* than by anxiety to consult the convenience of the engravers. But towards the latter part of his life it became the custom to execute drawings for engraving in sepia, in order to simplify the task of the engraver, if at the cost of reducing the ultimate gains of the draughtsman. The fact that, of above a hundred drawings prepared for the engravers by Turner before the period of these exhibitions of the Cookes, about twenty only were found in his possession at his death, proves that the apparently unnecessary labour lavished by Turner upon such work was not without material reward.

Sir Walter Armstrong may not be inclined to admit the claims of Cookes' show-room to rank as a public exhibition, but he can hardly deny those of the Galleries of the Birmingham Society of Artists and the Newcastle Academy, to name only two of the provincial exhibitions to which the painter contributed drawings such as he criticises.

The aggressiveness of technical handling in the plates of the "Southern Coast" evidently forced itself upon the attention of the eminent critic, since he reasons back from it to the elaboration of the original drawings. And it must be confessed that the two brothers who executed nearly three-fourths of the engravings were not artists equal to expressing in their translations of his works any appreciation they may have had of Turner's aims. A curious involuntary recognition of their inability to grasp the stylistic peculiarities of the artists who drew for them is afforded by the latest of Turner's biographers, who has singled out from the "Coast" subjects two, both, as it happens, by Wint, for particular admiration as the productions of his hero.

One of the reasons why the dexterity of the Cookes was driven to dissipating itself in calligraphic flourishes arose from the fact that the plates had to be engraved upon exactly the same scale as the drawings. It is impossible to say whether Turner had any settled views as to the proportions that one ought to bear to the other; but on some occasions the matter is known to have been decided for him by the publishers. The drawings for Hakewill's "Italy," the "Harbours" and the "Rivers of England," as well as many of those for the later vignettes and frontispieces, are the same size as the engravings from them. Those for the "History of Richmondshire" and "England and Wales" were reduced, the first by one-third, the second by nearly one-half, in transference to the copper. This reduction in the case of the "England and Wales" subjects is especially striking in the present connexion, as Turner is believed to have taken particular interest in the planning and production of this series. The drawings are crowded with detail such as only the most summary engraving could render intelligible even on a similar scale. When diminished to one-half the size, any display of engravers' virtuosity was completely impossible. Indeed, to so great a degree is the condensation carried, that Ruskin, when anxious to explain the qualities of the drawings to the readers of "Modern Painters," was compelled to have a few square inches from some of them engraved in the original dimensions. It is observable, moreover, that the habit of accumulating masses of detail in his pictures, including those never intended for engraving, grew upon Turner up to a certain point in his advancing years. While successfully as he trained his engravers to render the tones of distance, and the forms of cloud, with delicate fidelity to his style, he was scarcely ever able to teach them to understand the characteristic conventionalities of his foregrounds. And it was, no doubt, upon this account that he gladly complied with the fashionable demand for vignette forms, where this difficulty had no existence.

The progress of this passion for detail may be traced in a very interesting manner, through the long series of touched proofs in the British Museum. The earliest of these, *Browsholme* (from Whitaker's "History of Whalley," 1800) and *Oriel College* ("Oxford Almanac," 1801), are retouched in a broad style with white chalk only. An attempt to raise in this way the tone of the lights in the plates of engravers educated in the darkling traditions of Woollett seems, in fact, to have been the principal object of Turner's attention at this period. And he is known to have expressed, in words which have already been quoted, his pleasure and surprise upon meeting with an engraver, in the person of John Pye, who could, as he put it, "see the lights." But Pye was an exception, and a proof of the *Gledhow* (engraved about 1815, by George Cooke for Whitaker's "Leodis and Elmete," published November 1820) is far from the last which shows the struggle for light still engaging the painter's energies more closely than any other quality of engraving. The paper is deeply scored with a knife and hatched all over with white chalk, and a note in the margin entreats the engraver to "make the lights produced by the scraper very brilliant"; the chalk "being more for general tones." Even here, however, in a small marginal sketch of the outline of a roof, anxiety for minute truthfulness, natural enough upon this occasion in a topographical draughtsman, is already discernible. Another plate by George Cooke—the frontispiece to the "Antiquities of Pola" (1818)—shows in two consecutive proofs how actual fact had by this time taken precedence of general light and shade in Turner's estimation. The earlier contains a quantity of architectural material added in pencil, which the later, with sweeping strokes of white chalk, attempts to subdue into aërial perspective.

The long series of proofs of the "Southern Coast" forms, however, the most interesting portion of the collection. It is curious to notice that in the earliest of these, *Lulworth Cove* (March 1814), the white chalk still holds the place afterwards taken by the lead pencil. The artist probably felt that, with the addition of more detail, however relevant, this subject might cross the boundary between landscape art and geological diagram. *Weymouth* (published at the same time) is, on the other hand, covered with many alterations in black lead intended to make the forms of boats and rigging more clearly intelligible; while the same means are used in *Lyme Regis* (Nov. 1814) to reinforce the stratification of the cliffs. This time, however, it had a definite artistic purpose; "to counteract," as a note by Turner explains, "the sweeping lines of all the hills," and a further comment, "the lights I want had better be reserved

until the next proof," seems to show that the procedure adopted in the *Pola* had now approved itself as customary. The "next proof," here mentioned, bears upon its margin a well-known note of W. B. Cooke's giving such a valuable account of Turner's method of retouching that it is desirable to print it once more in this place. "On receiving this proof," writes the engraver, "Turner expressed himself highly gratified—he took a piece of *white chalk* and a piece of *black*, giving me the option as to which he should touch it with. I chose the white; he then threw the black chalk to some distance from him. When done, I requested he would touch another proof in *black*. 'No,' said he, 'you have had your choice and must abide by it.' How much the comparison would have gratified the admirers of the genius of this *great and extraordinary artist!*" It is, indeed, difficult to imagine what the painter would have done with the black chalk upon this occasion, since he found it necessary to disfigure the proof which gratified him so highly with such quantities of the white. Without this verbal explanation posterity would assuredly have been left to conclude that it was as far from expressing the delicacy aimed at by Turner as any of its predecessors, or as its successor *Torbay*, which has merely the words "Too dark" scribbled across the sky. Later on, *Portsmouth* (February 1825), an early plate of his favourite engraver, William Miller, was found to lack distinctness in the rigging of the ships. But perhaps the most remarkable instance of insistence upon trifles of realism is to be found in a proof of an earlier plate, *Plymouth Dock* (October 1816). The left-hand foreground here has extracted from the painter a commendatory "Bravo!" scrawled across it, but a diminutive object in the hand of one of a group of sailors making merry, which appears on the right, was found wanting in actuality. Accordingly a note, "Can make the fiddle more distinct," accompanied by an inimitable sketch of the instrument, is to be found in the margin. This insistence upon the fiddle, entirely immaterial to the pictorial effect, no doubt reflected the gaiety of the artist's mind at the time, and the proof, suggestively marked by Cooke, "Sent by post from Mr. Fawkes's seat in Yorkshire," is in every way a precious morsel for the student of Turner's character.

Scarcely inferior in interest as an artistic document is a proof of the *Vale of Ashburnham* ("Views in Sussex," 1819). In this, besides much general enhancing of the lights with white chalk, many details of extreme apparent unimportance are elaborately explained. Thus the contents of a field in the further middle distance are to be distinguishable as "hop-poles in bundles"; special attention is

called to the fact that a house—still further from the spectator—has "three windows each side of the entrance"; and even the remote horizon is to be enriched, as a half-illegible note directs, with some "rocks" which would assuredly be invisible in nature. Much more testimony of the same kind might be extracted from the same sources were it not that the distinguished critic, whose views regarding Turner's attitude towards the engravers they have been incidentally used to combat, has in a brilliant chapter (the tenth) of his book pointed to the veritable cause of the change he has described. This change was, in fact, due to the intellectual atmosphere of the painter's lifetime. It was, in the first place, a period of revolution in the political and the industrial world, and such upheavals have been accompanied invariably in modern, and perhaps also in ancient, history by the recrudescence of naturalism in painting and sculpture. This is, indeed, no more than would be expected from the transference of the control of the sources of wealth, and, by consequence, of art-patronage also, into the hands of a class little fitted by education to appreciate the artificial qualities of style and imaginative reflexion. And it is for this reason inevitable that painting as well as engraving should have been bound, as Sir Walter Armstrong expresses it, "during the greater part of Turner's lifetime, hand and foot to the tyranny of *bourgeois* ideals"; that the transitory conditions of English middle-class life should have ceased to demand from pictorial art "the large harmony of design, the unity of conception, which spring naturally from a desire to adapt one of the freest forms of art to previously existing data"; that its place should instead have been usurped by a striving to gratify an "impertinent curiosity," and the artistic vice of "subordinating the welfare of the work of art itself to the idea with which the artist is big." Yet great geniuses have been known to soar above material surroundings more brutalising in this respect than those through which Turner had to make his way.

The gulf traversed by the theory and practice of fine art during the artist's lifetime was indeed vast. He was less than two years old when the immortal discourse of Reynolds upon the "Reality of a Standard of Taste" was delivered; he survived to see the publication of the first volume of "Modern Painters." The Academy exhibition of 1790, the earliest to which he contributed, counted a large and sombre romantic picture by Fuseli as its principal attraction; in that of 1850, where the last of his exhibited pictures were to be seen, Millais' *Christ in the House of His Parents* riveted public attention. Turner's work was at every stage in sympathy with the

principle underlying this great transition, and by a natural consequence, it follows that his admirers are divided broadly into two parties. To one of these the painter's revulsion from the classical rules upon which the seventh discourse of Reynolds is based is a misfortune to be lamented and excused at the expense of the exigencies of engraving, financial expedience or what not. To the other his approach to the standard of naturalism held up by the author of "Modern Painters" is only too slow and uncertain.

A natural boundary between them is afforded by the abandoning of *Liber Studiorum* and the artist's first visit to Rome in 1819–20. His first important undertaking after his return, "The Rivers of England," is, as has been already pointed out, strongly marked with the signs of transition. Indeed, from these signs the prints may be said to derive their principal importance. In spite of the abuse of grandiose titles not uncommon at that time, it is incredible that the twenty plates published can represent more than a part of what was originally intended. The scheme, as far as Turner was concerned, was an attempt to combine the breadth and softness achieved by mezzotint in *Liber Studiorum* with an exuberance of detail such as line engraving alone had been able to secure in the "Southern Coast." It is possible that, if no other considerations had entered into the matter, he would have succeeded in his aim. But the question of durability in the plates had also, upon the publishers' account, to take a place in the compromise. Of the six engravers employed, four had already proved their skill by plates for *Liber Studiorum*. But Charles Turner when called upon to inaugurate the new series (January 1, 1824) with a repetition, modified in some respects, of one of his most successful subjects in the old, found himself face to face with a task beyond his powers. For not only had he in this new *Norham Castle* to overcome the difficulties of the newly discovered and imperfectly understood process of mezzotint upon steel, but he had to grapple with the mass of minute features with which the painter's growing passion for incidental detail had led him to encumber the foreground. Wreaths of mist, figures, cattle, and even a cock crowing on a wall introduced to hammer the impression of the effect of early morning into the spectator, taxed the method employed beyond its capacity and pointed to the inevitable adoption of line engraving as the only available manner of reproducing this accumulation of matter. Such engravings, however, may have proved practical from the publisher's point of view, although, as three of the steel plates broke down during the printing, even so they were not entirely successful. A glance, upon the other hand, at one of the

plates, executed upon copper in what it is natural to suppose represents Turner's spirit towards the compromise, shows a result even more disastrous to the publisher than the former had proved to the painter. The outline of the *Kirkstall Abbey*, to select an appropriate example, was in the first place delicately indicated by etching in soft ground; over this another ground was laid so microscopically fine in texture that it is only possible for an expert to determine whether it is in aquatint or mezzotint; upon the top of this is much work clearly in the latter method, while the whole is reinforced with a copious use of dry-point. The charm of such a plate had evaporated almost before the printing had begun, and nothing is easier when studying it than to bring oneself into complete agreement with Cooke's point of view, as explained in his irate letter, in the quarrel which terminated his connexion with Turner. In fact, had he surrendered the twenty-five India proofs from each plate demanded by the painter, he would, in such an instance as the *Kirkstall Abbey*, have made him a present of all the tolerable impressions it was capable of producing.

There is, indeed, no greater anomaly in the painter's strange character than the attitude he revealed towards engraving upon this and other occasions, nor is its least curious feature his habit for which no reasonable explanation can be found, of hoarding all the finest impressions of plates from his designs. His conduct with regard to *Liber Studiorum*, when he had only his own interests to damage, has already been touched upon, but his failure to induce the Cookes to subscribe this suicidal policy led to his engaging with a more compliant publisher for the production of the "Picturesque Views in England and Wales" (1827–38). Upon this great work, the most imposing and characteristic carried out by Turner with the aid of line engraving, nineteen engravers were employed. Of these, six had already profited by Turner's instruction in the course of the "Southern Coast," three in the "History of Richmondshire," one in both publications; while one other (W. R. Smith) besides engraving two plates for the "Richmondshire" had also contributed to Hakewill's "Italy." The production ended in financial failure, and the settlement of affairs involved the sale of the copper plates. They were secured by the painter himself, in order, as he is said to have remarked, that no more of his plates should be "worn to shadows," or used to produce what he called "umbrella prints." His solicitude upon this account would seem odd enough regarded only in relation to the pains he took, as we have seen, to deprive the public of as many as possible of the choice impressions. But it becomes even more astounding when

the plates themselves are brought under consideration. For it is not too much to say that many of them had never had any youthful freshness to lose; while in almost all the tenuity of the original work, rendered yet more delicate by the copious use of the burnisher for finishing-touches could, even before it wore down, as it speedily did, yield its charm only under the most careful printing. The extraordinarily subtle tones of such plates as the *Richmond from the Moors* and *Llanthony Abbey* (both engraved by J. T. Willmore) are only to be appreciated in the engraver's proofs, while it is rare to find two even of these perfect in every particular. Such a state of things existing, though in a less marked degree, even in the early straightforward prints of the school of Pye, may well excuse the pedantic attitude regarding states with which collectors of Turner's engravings have been reproached.

If a well-known anecdote related by Thornbury is to be believed, Turner, not content with hiding away all he could amass of the few perfect impressions his reckless experimenting permitted the plates to produce, actually had objections to the spreading abroad of his engravings in tolerable condition. This story narrates how Turner, being advised by Lawrence to make use of mezzotint upon steel, retorted that he had no desire to become an author of "basket engravings," such as those, from the President's famous portrait of Lady Peel, which were, he declared, being sold in the streets for sixpence apiece. Setting aside the inconsistency of this insulting speech with all that is known of the relations of the two men, the facts remain that the original portrait was painted no less than three years after Turner's engravers had first tried the method, and that the plate in question was engraved by Giller two years before Turner, for the reasons already suggested, finally discarded the process. That the plate was engraved at Sir Robert Peel's private expense, and that it was, as Lawrence's letters explain, a technical failure, are further reasons to prevent its becoming a "basket engraving" at that time, and to account for its rarity at this.

With the completion of "England and Wales," the peculiar interest of the Turnerian school of engraving loses itself in the general history of the decline of the art. The work executed by the painter especially for the engravers, during the remainder of his life, took almost invariably the form of small illustrations for books produced by publishers, to whom the utmost brilliancy of effect consistent with durability in the plates were the matters of first importance. The mechanical improvements which accompanied the adoption of engraving upon steel about 1830, and a general advance in the

standard of the art—due in no small degree to Turner's efforts—reduced the fulfilling of these conditions to predicable certainty. But it cannot be said that the result was other than to debase the effect of Turner's plates (amounting between 1825 and 1839 to nearly 350 in number) to the level of those engraved, at the same time, and frequently for the same publications, after Stanfield, Harding, Prout and other less capable artists. There are, of course, some exceptions, mostly belonging to the earlier period before steel plates had become universal; but the fine taste displayed in the actual engraving of the vignettes for Rogers' "Italy" (1830) and "Poems" (1834), for example, soon made way for monstrous faultlessness of mechanical excellence. Yet the majority of the engravings are the work of the same band which had shared the glories of the "England and Wales" plates. And two new and valuable recruits, Cousen and Armytage, who joined it during the progress of the "Seine" (1834-35), were soon drilled into the same line. While even the Findens, when translating Turner, forbore indulgence in the technical marvels of mixed methods such as afterwards, in the hands of Landseer's engravers, gilded with their uncertain glories the sunset of engraving upon metal.

Turner, moreover, continued to retouch the proofs with indefatigable patience; and, indeed, occasionally seems to have used his perseverance in doing so as an excuse for reducing, particularly in the case of the "Rivers of France" subjects, to the slightest possible memoranda the drawings upon which the plates were based. Not less exacting were his demands on the engravers when the large plates, about twenty in number, executed from his oil pictures during his lifetime, were passing under his supervision. They are amusingly illustrated by some notes upon the margin of a proof, preserved in the British Museum, of Miller's engraving of *Modern Italy* (published 1843) and by the letters, printed by Thornbury, relating to the execution of the plate. Amongst the innumerable technical instructions filling the first letter (October 22, 1841), the reasons for the changes are suggestively indicated. They are almost invariably prompted by the ruling passion for the accumulation of incident and detail. Thus care is to be taken that the Campagna appearing in the remote distance shall resemble the "bare, sterile flat" it actually is; while it is not enough to enhance the effect of the foreground with "dashing touches and bright lights," but a baby "wrapped up in swaddling-clothes" is to be placed in it in order to "increase the interest of the whole!"

Not less emphatically do the notes upon the touched proof call the attention of the engraver to similar points. "I must ask you,"

writes the painter, "to take out particularly every appearance of the Rings at the upper part;" of an unimportant object in the foreground, "I mean it for a bough shiver'd off"; and they insist with equal force upon the necessity of those gradations which had, under less favourable circumstances, undermined the constitution of the "England and Wales" plates. Again, could anything be more characteristic of the *impresario* of *Liber Studiorum* than the inquiries in another letter (June 15, 1842) as to the cost in Edinburgh of printing engravings ("*paper included*"), and unsuccessful impressions to be "*given up but not charged*," or the amount of "*discount* for ready money" that it is possible to extort from the printer? Nor is the accustomed ending of the transaction—engraver and publisher wearied out and proceeding with the printing of the plate which the painter vehemently maintains to be still unfinished—less of a piece with the tenour of the whole of a career then nearing its close.

Within ten years of the date of this letter the irony of fate had scattered in every direction, except that intended by the artist, the golden heaps he had so carefully built up, and decreed the dispersion of the reams of prints he had jealously hoarded. And now the temple of Naturalism, wherein his later contemporaries had assigned him a principal altar, has begun likewise to crumble away. But, thanks to the traditions with which his youth was fettered, his shrine may be re-erected in the sanctuary of another faith. For, as a renowned Italian critic, in defending another painter, accused or credited like Turner with deserting the classical standard, has pleaded that monotonous attitudes, conventional draperies, lustreless eyes and pallid carnations can combine to produce a supernatural and mystic effect; and has asked how, this being the case, it was possible for the art of a Correggio to appear in its day as other than worldly and material; so is it not possible that posterity, which has exalted the immortal Parmesan to a place beside, if not amongst, the austere stylists of an earlier day, may judge Turner in a similar spirit? The zeal of his successors demonstrated, as the evangelist of Naturalism lived to discover, that Turner's subscription to the faith was far from whole-hearted. Still in the latest sketch, the latest plate, the abhorred Academic ideas absorbed in his youth were to be detected. But the world, spell-bound by the eloquence of the gospel, shut its eyes to this, and laboriously mended with the clay of Turner the road along which British Landscape Art still stumbles, her conflicting supporters for ever proclaiming how high she has mounted, how low she has sunk, since the day when he was made one with Nature.

C. F. Bell.

LS. 1. -Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Etched by him in outline; Engraved in Mezzotint by C. Turner, Published Feb. 20, 1808. Plate X. "Liber Studiorum"

SHIPS IN A BREEZE, or THE EGREMONT SEAPIECE

Reproduced from a Trial Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

LS. 3. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Etched by him in outline; Engraved in Mezzotint by C. Turner, Published June 10, 1808. Plate XIII. "Liber Studiorum"

THE BRIDGE IN MIDDLE DISTANCE

Reproduced from a Proof before Letters in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

LS. 3. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Etched by him in outline; Engraved in Mezzotint by R. Dunkarton, Published Jan. 1, 1811. Plate XXV. "Liber Studiorum"

HIND HEAD HILL

Reproduced from a Late Trial Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

LS. 4. Drawn, Etched and Engraved by J. M. W. Turner, Published Feb. 11, 1812. Plate XXXIX. "Liber Studiorum"

CRYPT OF KIRKSTALL ABBEY

Reproduced from a First Published State, in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

LS. 5. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Etched by him in outline; Engraved in Mezzotint by R. Dunkarton, Published April 23, 1812. Plate LXVI. "Liber Studiorum"

RISPAH

Reproduced from a First Published State in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

LS. 6. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Etched by him in outline; Engraved in Mezzotint by G. Clint, Published Feb. 14, 1812. Plate LXI. "Liber Studiorum"

PROCRIS AND CEPHALUS

Reproduced from an Engraver's Finished Proof. In the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

LS. 7. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Etched by him in outline; Engraved in Mezzotint by C. Turner, Published Jan. 1, 1816. Plate LVII. "Liber Studiorum"

NORHAM CASTLE ON THE TWEED

Reproduced from a First Published State in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

LS. 8. Drawn and Engraved by J. M. W. Turner, Published Jan. 1, 1816. Plate LVIII. "Liber Studiorum"

RAGLAN CASTLE

Reproduced from a First Published State in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

SOLWAY MOSS

Reproduced from the Etching in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

LS. 10. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Etched by him in outline; Engraved in Mezzotint by T. Lupton, Published Jan. 1, 1816. Plate LII. "Liber Studiorum"

SOLWAY MOSS

Reproduced from an Advanced Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

LS. 11. Drawn and Engraved by J. M. W. Turner, Published Jan. 1, 1816. Plate LX. "Liber Studiorum"

THE SOURCE OF THE ARVEIRON

Reproduced from an Early Trial Proof, Drawn upon by Turner. In the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

LS. 12. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Etched by him in outline: Engraved in Mezzotint by T. Lupton, Published Jan. 1, 1819. Plate LXIX. "Liber Studiorum"

BEN ARTHUR, SCOTLAND

Reproduced from an Advanced Trial Proof touched by Turner. In the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

LS. 13. Drawn, Etched and Engraved by J. M. W. Turner, Published Jan. 1, 1819. Plate LXVI. "Liber Studiorum"

ÆSACUS AND HESPERIE

Reproduced from the Second Published State (with the face of Hesperie turned from Æsacus)

LS. 14. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Etched by him in outline; said to have been Engraved in Mezzotint by H. Dawe. Not Published

THE STORK AND AQUEDUCT, or THE HERON'S POOL

Reproduced from an Original Trial Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 18. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Engraved by J. T. Willmore, 1836, for Part 20 of "England and Wales," 1835

LLANTHONY ABBEY, MONMOUTHSHIRE

From a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 17. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Engraved by W. Miller, 1836, for Part 23 of "England and Wales," published 1837

DURHAM CATHEDRAL

From a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 3. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Engraved by W. B. Cooke, March 1, 1819, for "Views of Sussex"

BRIGHTLING OBSERVATORY, FROM ROSEHILL PARK

Reproduced from a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 4. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Engraved by John Pye for Part I. of "Richmondshire," 1819

HARDRAW FALL, RICHMOND, YORKSHIRE

Reproduced from a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 5. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Engraved by C. Heath for Part IV. of "Richmondshire," 1820

KIRKBY LONSDALE CHURCHYARD

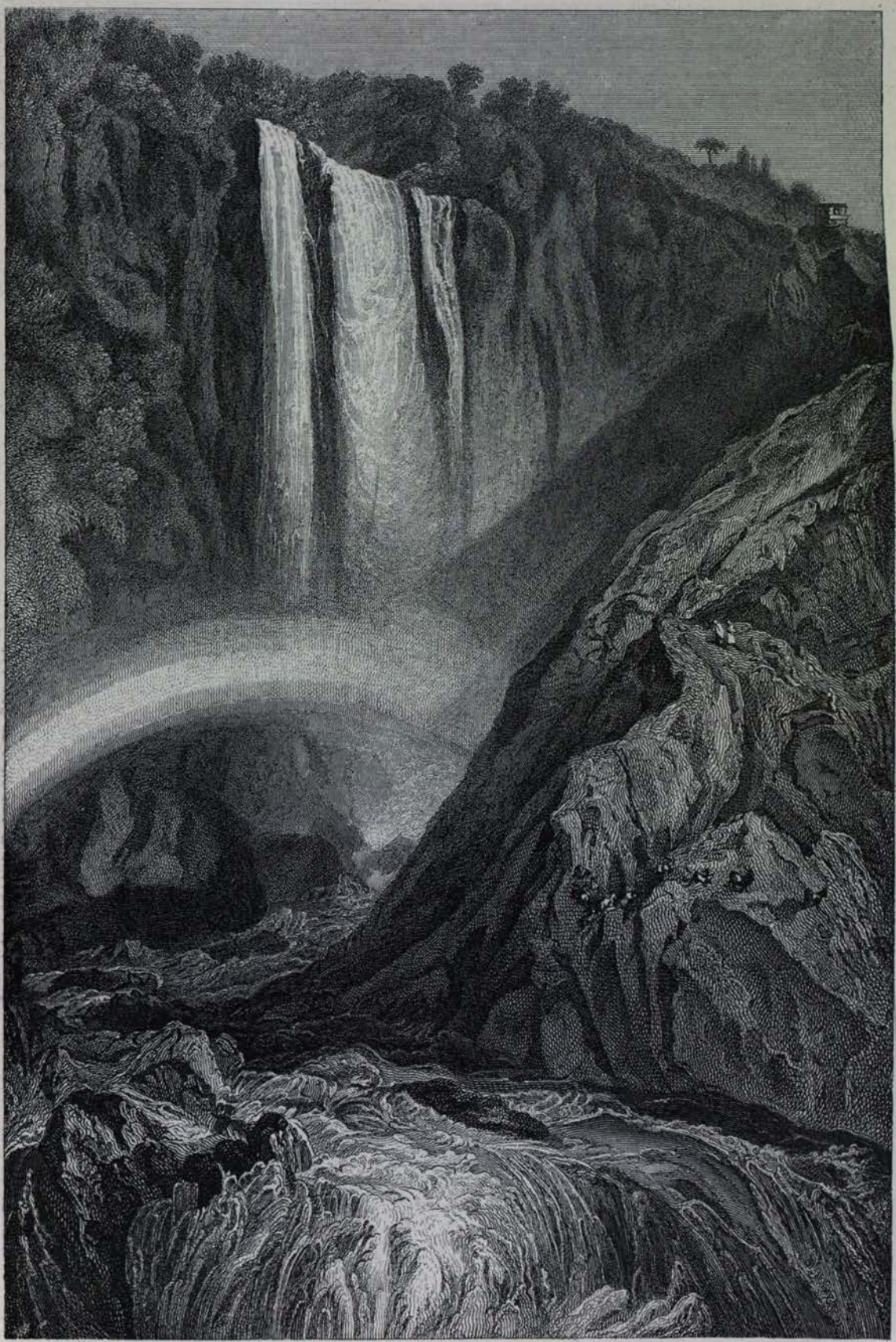
Reproduced from a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 6. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Engraved by J. C. Varrall for Part XI. of "Richmondshire," 1822

MERRICK ABBEY, SWALEDALE

Reproduced from a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 7. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, after a Sketch by James Hakewill, Engraved by J. Landseer, 1819



CASCADE OF TERNI

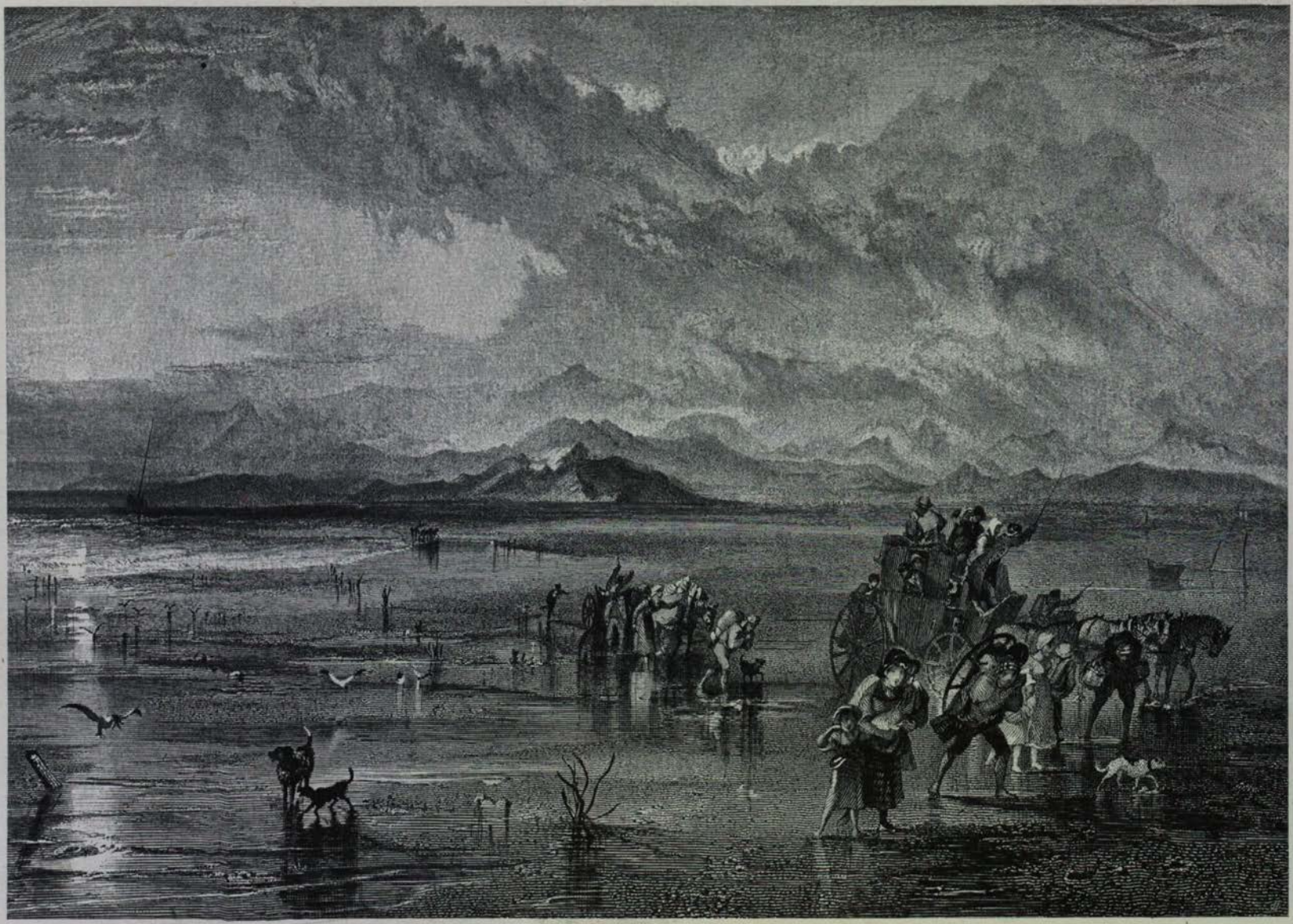
From a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 8. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Engraved by R. Wallis, June 1827, for Part 2 of "England and Wales," published 1827

COLCHESTER

From a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 9. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Engraved by R. Brandard, 1828, for Part 5 of "England and Wales," published 1828



LANCASTER SANDS

From a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 10. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Engraved by J. T. Willmore, March 1, 1828, for Part 6 of "England and Wales." published 1829

RICHMOND, YORKSHIRE

From a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 11. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Engraved by J. T. Willmore, May 1830, for Part 9 of "England and Wales," published 1830

ALNWICK CASTLE, NORTHUMBERLAND

From a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 12. Drawn by Turner, Engraved by J. T. Willmore for "Wanderings by the Loire," 1833

CLAIRMONT

From a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 13. Drawn by Turner, Engraved by R. Wallis for "Wanderings by the Loire," published 1833

SCENE ON THE LOIRE

From a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 14. Drawn by Turner, Engraved by W. Miller, 1833, for Sir Walter Scott's Poetical Works

MELROSE

From a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 15. Drawn by Turner, after a Sketch by J. Rich, Engraved by W. Radclyffe for Finden's "Bible"

NINEVEH

From a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 16. Drawn by Turner, Engraved by J. C. Armytage, for "Wanderings by the Seine," First Series, 1834

JUMIÈGES

From a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

LS. 15. Drawn and Etched by J. M. W. Turner, and supposed to have been Engraved by him. Not Published

CROWHURST, SUSSEX—EARLY SNOW

Reproduced from an Original Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

LS. 16. Drawn and Etched by J. M. W. Turner, and supposed to have been Engraved by him. Not Published

SWISS BRIDGE, MOUNT ST. GOTHARD

Reproduced from an Original Trial Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 1. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Engraved by J. Pye, 1811

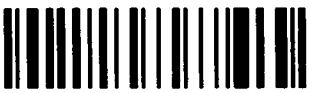
POPE'S VILLA, TWICKENHAM

Reproduced from a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.

E 2. Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, Engraved by W. B. Cooke for the "Southern Coast," Part 6, February 1, 1816

THE MEW STONE, AT THE ENTRANCE OF PLYMOUTH SOUND

Reproduced from a Proof in the Collection of W. G. Rawlinson, Esq.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